the weekly Standard

DECEMBER 11, 2006

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on democracy and great books

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—Joe Williams

The Private-Public School Debate

Careless measurements give the public the wrong information

According to a recent National Center for Education Statistics–sponsored study, students attending private schools performed better than students attending public schools. But after statistical adjustments were made for student characteristics, the private school advantage among 4th graders disappeared, giving way to a 4.5-point public school advantage in math and parity between the sectors in reading. For 8th graders, after adjustments, private schools retained a 7-point advantage in reading but achieved only parity in math. But, in fact, the study's measures of student characteristics are flawed; using the same data but substituting better measures of student characteristics, we found that three alternative models identified a private school advantage in nearly all comparisons.

—Paul E. Peterson and Elena Llaudet

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A Guest at the White House

The Scrapbook is not often called upon to tutor 60-year-old men in basic manners. But we feel compelled to offer a few friendly words of advice to the newly elected senator from Virginia, James Webb.

It seems that the senator-elect, attending a reception last week for new members of Congress at the White House, found himself in the presence of its occupant. Extending his hand toward Webb, who had had many harsh things to say about the president during his campaign, George W. Bush inquired: "How's your boy?"

A reasonable and compassionate inquiry, in The Scrapbook's view. Webb's son is a Marine corporal serving in Iraq; Webb wore the boy's combat boots throughout his campaign, which he removed and held aloft in triumph when he won election; and Bush is commander in chief of the armed forces.

Webb: "I'd like to get them [sic] out of Iraq."

Bush: "That's not what I asked you. How's your boy?"

Webb: "That's between me and my boy."

Webb's staffers let it be known around Washington that the senator-elect was so angered by Bush's inquiry that he was tempted to "slug" the president, and Webb later told the *Washington Post*, "I'm not particularly interested in having a picture of me and George W. Bush on my wall." He further explained: "Leaders do some symbolic things to try to convey who they are and what the message is."

In recounting this episode, columnist George F. Will moved swiftly to the heart of the matter, pronouncing Webb a "boor" and adding, by way of admonition, that "in a republic, people decline to be led by leaders who are insufferably full of themselves."

As always, however, The Scrapbook prefers to be prescriptive. And our counsel to Senator-elect Webb would be that, if the prospect of shaking hands and exchanging pleasantries with the president of the United States in the White House is too painful to bear—if, that is, it conveys the wrong message about who you are—it would be altogether fitting and proper to decline the president's hospitality and stay home. Surely somewhere in Webb's training as an officer and gentleman at the United States Naval Academy, he was taught that important lesson?

Oh, and speaking of Annapolis: We would further advise the senator-elect to avoid discussion of "slugging" George W. Bush when Webb's best-known experience in the ring involved losing a boxing championship to his Naval Academy classmate (and fellow Marine) Oliver North. ♦

The "Dirt on Churchill"

Elsewhere in this issue, Harvey Mansfield takes note of the many obstacles to teaching young people to appreciate greatness. "Any American education in greatness," he writes, "could begin by appealing to the admiration most of us already have for those who initiated the society we now enjoy. I know, of course, that such an appeal is not as easy as it ought to be" (an elegant understatement, as we shall see). Mansfield continues: "It must overcome or bypass the denigration of the Founders by the social scientists, today's version of the democratic historians, enemies of greatness, that Tocqueville warned against."

It so happens that a particularly vivid example of the denigration of greatness landed in our lap last week. A friend who belongs to the online Churchill-Chat group (incongruous-sounding, we know, but you can find it at *groups.google.com*) pointed out this entry from a student trolling for help on a final paper:

> I'm enrolled in a history class and part of the final is to find the "dirt" on famous people in history. I was assigned Winston Churchill. Short of finding some info on his fondness for alcohol I'm having difficulty. The problem is finding credible sources and not just someone's conjecture. It's a 2000+ word paper so I need as much "dirt" as you might be aware of, I don't like to put a lot of fluff into my papers. Not looking for anyone to do the paper for me just for some instances that you might be aware of. Maybe he kicked cats when he was a kid, was fond of collecting pictures of old time movie stars, whatever. Biggest thing is I need to be able to reference the "dirt" and the references need to be credible.
>
> Any help would be greatly appreciated!

Perhaps needless to add, this sparked quite a long set of rejoinders from the group's members. (One can't discount the possibility that the message is a deliberate provocation.) We're with the one who said, "Sorry you got this assignment; there isn't enough 'dirt' on Churchill to get a 50 word paragraph, let alone a 2,000 word essay." ♦

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You Can't Make This Stuff Up

Important scientific research, as summarized by reporter Andy Bromage in the *New Haven Advocate*:

> A collective "I told you so" will ripple through the world of Bush-bashers once news of Christopher Lohse's study gets out.
>
> Lohse, a social work master's student at Southern Connecticut State University, says he has proven what many progressives have probably suspected for years: a direct link between mental illness and support for President Bush.
>
> Lohse says his study is no joke. The thesis draws on a survey of 69 psychiatric outpatients in three Connecticut locations during the 2004 presidential election. Lohse's study, backed by SCSU psychology professor Jaak Rakfeldt and statistician Misty Ginacola, found a correlation between the severity of a person's psychosis and their preferences for president: The more psychotic the voter, the more likely they were to vote for Bush.
>
> But before you go thinking all your conservative friends are psychotic, listen to Lohse's explanation.
>
> "Our study shows that psychotic patients prefer an authoritative leader," Lohse says. "If your world is very mixed up, there's something very comforting about someone telling you, 'This is how it's going to be.'"
>
> The study was an advocacy project of sorts [you don't say!], designed to register mentally ill voters and encourage them to go to the polls, Lohse explains. The Bush trend was revealed later on.

No word on how their get-out-the-vote drive turned out. ♦

Satire Alert

From our good friend Scott Ott at *Scrappleface.com*:

> BUSH ORDERS PREEMPTIVE REDEPLOYMENT TO IRAN, SYRIA
>
> (2006-12-01) — Just days before the Iraq Study Group releases its top-secret report, President George Bush today ordered the Pentagon to preemptively redeploy U.S. troops from Iraq to "neutral neighboring countries including Iran and Syria."
>
> "I've said that I won't order our troops to make a graceful exit from Iraq," said Mr. Bush, "But I never ruled out making a graceful entrance into Iran and Syria where I expect our partners in peace to welcome us with open and raised arms." . . .
>
> But Mr. Bush said the Iraq Study Group, Kofi Annan and other Democrats have convinced him that engagement with Iran and Syria is crucial to finding a "holistic solution" to the Iraq situation.
>
> "At the very least," said Mr. Bush, "Redeploying our troops to Iran should help Iranian weapons manufacturers save some money on shipping." ♦

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Casual

Stand by Your Woman

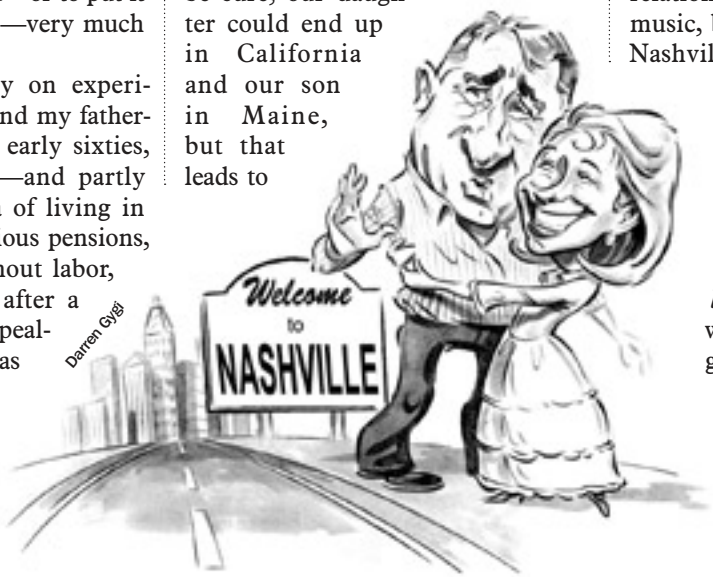
Being a superstitious fellow, I have tended not to think deeply about retirement. By that, I don't mean that I haven't been paying into various employer programs and federally mandated schemes, or investing wisely, over the decades. No, what I mean is that I haven't planned—or to put it accurately, daydreamed—very much about retirement.

This is based partly on experience—both my father and my father-in-law retired in their early sixties, and promptly expired—and partly on prudence. The idea of living in relative comfort off various pensions, of earning income without labor, is so counterintuitive after a working lifetime, so appealing and so tantalizing, as to seem, well, too good to be true. So I tend to wave off speculation on the subject with an all-purpose qualifier: *If I should live so long . . .*

Well, I am now of an age where the subject is less remote than it used to be. I still toss the AARP solicitations in the wastebasket, and since I'm not a golfer, ignore those handsome brochures about resorts for senior citizens along the South Carolina coast. But it is fair to assume that, sometime in the next ten years or so, employment will cease and the Golden Years shall begin.

Is this a welcome prospect? No and yes. I sincerely enjoy my work—note to editor: vomit here—and can say, in all truthfulness, that I look forward to arriving at the STANDARD offices every morning. But I have a carefully cultivated lazy streak, and can easily picture spending my afternoons planning day trips, or cataloguing my library, or chasing my long suffering, but still glamorous, wife across the veranda.

But where might all this be done? Without too much discussion, my wife and I seem to have settled implicitly on two Guiding Principles. The first is that we should live within striking distance—preferably in the same metropolitan area—of our children. To be sure, our daughter could end up in California and our son in Maine, but that leads to a corollary of Guiding Principle #1: For the bulk of our married life, my wife has been a southerner in exile, so if one of our beloved offspring settles somewhere in the Old Confederacy, we will be close behind.



I should point out, by the way, that my wife is no slouch in the manipulation department. Since she is a product of Nashville, and would undoubtedly prefer to return there at her leisure, she has carefully (and, to a startling degree, successfully) impressed the virtues of the place on our children. So the chances of one or the other of them, or even both, ending up in the capital of Tennessee are, I should guess, better than even.

The second, and undoubtedly decisive, Guiding Principle: Since my wife has loyally followed me around the country in the course of our married life—to Alabama, Kentucky, California, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and (my hometown) Washington, D.C.—it seems only fair, toward the end of the ride, that her preference should prevail.

Which, I confess, is fine with me. We were married in Nashville, and it has a first-rate university (Vanderbilt), good museums, nice weather, decent second-hand bookstores, charming restaurants, interesting architecture, and (courtesy of my wife) lots of acquaintances and relations. I can live without country music, but you can spend a week in Nashville without ever knowing it is Music City, USA.

Nevertheless, any pleasure I take in visiting Nashville, as we did this Thanksgiving, is subtly tinctured by the knowledge that this might well be the city—*if I should live so long*—where I will think wistfully of my beloved Virginia, distribute my possessions to deserving descendants, lose my driving privileges, have infinite time on my hands, grow too arthritic to play piano, fall and dislocate my hip, and attend an increasing number of funerals—including, of course, my own.

Sure, it's fun to drive around Nashville's verdant residential areas and contemplate the local housing prices (modest by Washington standards) or visit a museum and consider someday becoming a Friend of the Frist Center for the Visual Arts. During this recent sojourn I actually weighed the merits of different neighborhoods, and pondered whether it makes sense to settle in a one-story house in old age or to consider a "cluster" development, or even an apartment.

It's more fun, however, to realize that, even as time gallops along, these questions may remain unresolved for years to come.

PHILIP TERZIAN

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THERE IS ONE ISSUE THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS CAN AGREE ON NOW:

ENDING THE GENOCIDE IN DARFUR.

PHOTO: © OLIVIER JOBARD/SIPA PRESS

President Bush and Congressional leaders must join together now to push for the immediate deployment of a strong, UN-led peacekeeping force to protect the people of Darfur and re-energize the peace process. In order to be effective, this force will need:

1. An explicit mandate to protect civilians.
2. Rules of engagement permitting the use of force to save lives.
3. A chain of command allowing necessary and timely military action without approval from distant political or civilian personnel.

This will not require American troops, but it will require America's help. The African Union, United Nations, and humanitarian aid community must have the resources to undertake this difficult mission to save Darfur – before it's too late.

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Scalias of Justice

Terry Eastland's "The 'Good Judge'" (Nov. 13) shows one side of Justice Antonin Scalia's career, but that is not the only side. At a recent dinner party where he was the guest of honor, Justice Scalia was asked a question about the Declaration of Independence. "That's fluff," he said. I then observed that the Republican platform upon which Abraham Lincoln was elected president asserted that the principles of the Declaration of Independence were "embodied in the Constitution." "That's just politicians' talk," Scalia replied.

In his famous Rome interview, Justice Scalia declared that the "whole theory of democracy" is that the majority rules. According to Scalia, if a majority wants abortion to be legal, then it ought to be legal. If it wants abortion to be illegal, then it ought to be illegal. Substituting "slavery" for "abortion," one has exactly the position taken by Senator Stephen A. Douglas in his debates with Abraham Lincoln.

According to Scalia, the minority has only those rights that are granted to it by the majority. According to Lincoln, the minority is entitled to the rights with which we have all been equally and individually "endowed by our Creator." Those rights have their origin, not in the majority, but in God. They belonged to the black human beings in the antebellum and post-Reconstruction South, no less than to the white majorities that denied them those rights.

It is strange that Eastland should ignore Scalia's ignoring the original intent of the Declaration of Independence, our founding document, since he himself, with William J. Bennett, authored a book entitled *Counting by Race: The Idea of Equality from the Founding Fathers to Bakke and Webber*. In that book, Bennett and Eastland denounced "counting by race" and based their argument squarely on the proposition about the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution that was set forth in the Republican platform of 1860.

Harry V. Jaffa
Claremont, Calif.

To state that Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia is not a politician, as Terry Eastland does, is to ignore Scalia's track record of advocating a particular political point of view, both on and off the bench. Read any number of Scalia's opinions (for example, his reference to the "homosexual agenda" in his 2003 dissent in *Lawrence* v. *Texas*), and you will see a politician at work. Whatever your political point of view may be, Scalia's vote in favor of George W. Bush in *Bush* v. *Gore* can only be seen as Scalia the activist, moving to cut off the state of Florida's own internal ballot counting process.

Allen Groves
Waynesboro, Va.

Math Addicts

Melana Zyla Vickers's "Down for the Count" (Nov. 6) is the clearest explanation that I have seen of our nation's woeful math scores. My undergraduate and graduate degrees are in mathematics, and I have long deplored the way math is taught in elementary school. Now, Vickers informs us that many of the members of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics have degrees in education, not math. Would you like to have surgery performed on you by a doctor who learned his skills from someone who was trained in "teaching techniques," but had only a rudimentary knowledge of medicine? It is no wonder that so many people in this country say that they despise and have never understood mathematics.

Edward Ver Hoef
Boonsboro, Md.

Taking Issue

Shikha Dalmia and Leonard Gilroy's "Taking 'Takings' to the Voters" (Oct. 30) is an exception to the customary objectivity of The Weekly Standard. The authors portray Leo Hayashi as a victim of draconian regulations imposed by the California city of Brea—regulations that would nullify most of the long-accumulated value of Hayashi's 300-acre property purchased 30 years ago.

Brea is misrepresented as being hostile to property rights by an emotional appeal depicting Hayashi as a poor immigrant arriving on these shores penniless in search of the American dream. What the authors overlook is that Hayashi, who purchased the land for speculation, has yet to submit plans for development, and that he did achieve a portion of his American dream by selling one parcel for $500,000 and another for $1.3 million. The developer's plans for those parcels are currently being processed by the city of Brea. Not even the Constitution guarantees a maximum return on investment for land speculation.

By focusing solely on the property rights of developers and speculators, the authors neglected to consider the importance of protecting the property rights and safety of future homeowners and their families that may potentially live on that land. When disaster hits, the government is blamed for not anticipating it and, worse yet, allowing it to happen. When developers are allowed to build homes in a flood plain, the authorities are held accountable for not protecting those homes; in New Orleans, for example, the government is now expected to pour billions of dollars into shoring up levees to protect vulnerable developments.

Houses built on steep slopes in Laguna Beach, Calif., met with disaster when those slopes failed—destroying homes and taking lives. Reconstruction is expected to cost local taxpayers $20 million, but how does one compensate for the shattered dreams and lost lives? Who was responsible to ensure

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that the land in Laguna Beach was safe for development? Obviously, the developer and his engineers made the wrong call—with tragic consequences. And now the city's taxpayers, not the developer, are picking up the tab. It is a valuable lesson: Cities must practice due diligence in establishing hillside zoning ordinances that help determine both suitable locations and the number of homes that can be built safely.

When a city approves an environmental impact report (EIR) for development, issues building permits, and approves construction, isn't that assurance to potential homeowners that the site is safe and potentially worth investment of one's life savings? The alternative is "home buyers beware." It would be totally irresponsible for government to ignore such risks.

Gilroy and Dalmia also complain that the developer would be expected to pay the costs for necessary infrastructure. Do the authors expect the taxpayers to pay for this infrastructure without receiving any benefits for doing so? As an elected representative of all the people of Brea, I recognize that not only must we safeguard individual property rights, but we must also protect the "general welfare" of the community.

JOHN BEAUMAN
Councilman
Brea, Calif.

LEONARD GILROY AND SHIKHA DALMIA RESPOND: There is nothing that damns John Beauman's case more than what he says himself. Leo Hayashi—whom Beauman derides as a speculator—bought 400 acres of land, sold a fourth of it, and saved the rest to develop in the future. But Brea wants to wipe out much of the accumulated value of Hayashi's saved land by down-zoning the units he could build on it from 400 to 15. Beauman justifies this by claiming that "not even the Constitution guarantees a maximum return on investment."

This is the United States, not the Soviet Union. The last time we checked, no constitution gives government officials like Councilman Beauman the right to establish the maximum return on property on a whim. If Beauman doubts that proposition, he should consider this: Would he consent to the government confiscating his IRA to purchase parks for his neighbors simply because he had previously sold some of his portfolio for a profit?

Beauman's claim that the down-zoning was necessary to minimize property losses during disasters is a red herring. The city of Brea requires developers to present detailed plans demonstrating the stability of proposed construction before issuing a building permit. If the slope of Hayashi's property could not support all the units, surely the permitting process could handle that concern. Why is it necessary for authorities to resort to a blunt, blanket restriction that would wipe out over 90 percent of the development potential of Hayashi's land? Could it be that disaster planning is simply Brea's pretext to grab land to amass open space?

Yet asking individual property owners to bear the cost of public goods is unfair. That's why Prop 90—the ballot measure that 47.5 percent of California voters, just shy of a majority, voted for this November—would have required local authorities to compensate property owners for lost value from regulations not related to public health or safety.

California requires developers to prepare environmental impact analyses for proposed developments. Shouldn't the state require local authorities to prepare similar analyses detailing the impact of new regulations on property rights and land values? The callous disregard for the plight of Hayashi demonstrated by Beauman and the city of Brea illustrates that such a requirement would be a wise way of protecting property rights.

DISENFRANCHISE SLOTHS

REGARDING Andrew Ferguson's "Convenience Voting" (Nov. 20): I am a quadriplegic, and I still manage to vote every two years. I do not understand why we should care about the votes of those people too "inconvenienced" to go to their precinct and vote. While reasonable accommodations should be made, of course, there should indeed be a hurdle between the voting booth and those who are too lazy to make the effort to exercise their duties as American citizens.

WAYNE JOHNSON
Ham Lake, Minn.

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the weekly Standard

A Perfect Failure

In the frenzied final week of the Iraq Study Group's deliberations, co-chairmen James Baker and Lee Hamilton took time out to pose for a photo spread for a fashion magazine, *Men's Vogue*. This might seem a dubious decision given the gravity of the moment and their self-appointed roles as the nation's saviors. The "wise men" who counseled Lyndon Johnson during Vietnam and the members of the Kissinger Commission who tried to reshape Ronald Reagan's Central American policies did not sit for Annie Leibovitz in the middle of their endeavors. Nor did they hire a mega-public relations firm to sell their recommendations (supposedly intended for the president) to the public at large, as Baker and Hamilton have done.

But we think the chairmen's self-promotion and big-time product marketing are perfectly understandable. They have to do something to distract attention from two unpleasant facts.

The first is that after nine months of deliberation and an unprecedented build-up of expectations that these sages would produce some brilliant, original answer to the Iraq conundrum, the study group's recommendations turn out to be a pallid and muddled reiteration of what most Democrats, many Republicans, and even Donald Rumsfeld and senior military officials have been saying for almost two years. Thus, according to at least six separate commission sources sent out to pre-spin the press, the Baker-Hamilton report will call for a gradual and partial withdrawal of American forces in Iraq, to begin at a time unspecified and to be completed by a time unspecified. The goal will be to hand over responsibility for security in Iraq to the Iraqis themselves as soon as this is feasible, and to shift the American role to training rather than fighting the insurgency and providing security. The decision of how far, how fast, and even whether to withdraw will rest with military commanders in Iraq, who will base their determination on how well prepared the Iraqis are to take over. Even after the withdrawal, the study group envisions keeping at least 70,000 American troops in Iraq for years to come.

To say that this is not a new idea is an understatement. Donald Rumsfeld and top military officials have from the beginning of the occupation three years ago aimed to do precisely what the Baker-Hamilton group now recommends. In 2003, the Pentagon set a goal of reducing the forces from 130,000 to 30,000 by the end of the year, handing responsibility for Iraq to the newly formed Iraqi army. Every year since, the Pentagon has aimed to reduce U.S. forces substantially. This time last year, defense officials announced their intention to reduce the force of 150,000 to well under 100,000 by the end of 2006.

So now here comes the Iraq Study Group suggesting that the present force of about 140,000 should be reduced to around 70,000 by early 2008. But as with all similar plans previously devised by the Pentagon, the timing, according to the *Washington Post*'s sources, "would be more a conditional goal than a firm timetable, predicated on the assumption that circumstances on the ground would permit it." As Democratic senator Jack Reed noted, the group's recommendations repeat "what some of us have been saying for a while." But, of course, the Baker plan will face the same challenges as all previous such suggestions. In the past, Pentagon desires to draw down the force foundered precisely because "circumstances on the ground" did not permit a reduction of American forces. Despite efforts to make it appear otherwise, then, the real recommendation of the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group is "stay the course." For this we waited nine months?

One of the more striking aspects of the Iraq Study Group's report is that these recommendations are clearly not anyone's idea of the right plan. As the *New York Times* put it, they represent "a compromise between distinct paths that the group has debated since March." One commission source declared, "We reached a consensus, which in itself is remarkable." "Everyone felt good about where we ended up," said another. We're happy for them. But reaching consensus among the 10 members of the group was presumably not the primary goal of this exercise. The idea was to provide usable advice for the Bush administration that would help it move toward an acceptable outcome in Iraq. In that, the commission has failed.

There is another problem for Baker, of course, which justifies the money the commission is spending to hire the

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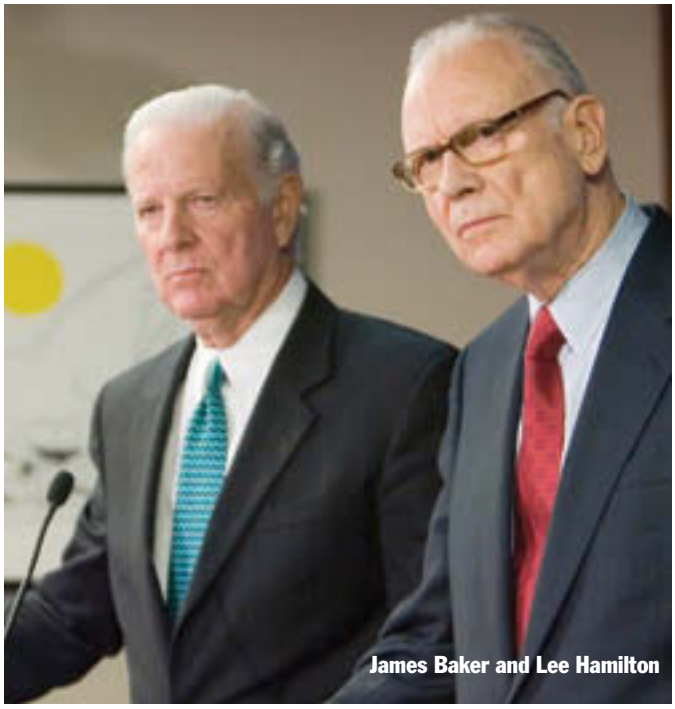
Edelman public relations firm. It is that the Baker commission report is, as the press likes to say, dead on arrival. Over the course of the past few weeks, and especially this past week, President Bush has made clear that he has no intention of following the commission's recommendations. In his press conference with the Iraqi prime minister this past Thursday, Bush took a direct slap at the Iraq Study Group. "I know there's a lot of speculation that these reports in Washington mean there's going to be some kind of graceful exit out of Iraq," he told reporters. But "this business about graceful exit just simply has no realism to it at all."

As for Baker's other significant and more original recommendation—that the United States hold direct talks with Iran and Syria to get their help in Iraq—Bush nixed that idea, too. In Estonia last Tuesday, the president said, "Iran knows how to get to the table with us, and that is to do that which they said they would do, which is verifiably suspend their [uranium] enrichment programs." This the Iranians have steadfastly refused to do, of course. As for Syria, Bush continues to accuse Syria, rightly, of trying to retake control of Lebanon by means of assassination and support of terrorist violence. He gave no indication that he was willing to begin direct talks with Syria on Iraq.


James Baker and Lee Hamilton

AFP / Getty Images / Mandel Ngan

It's not as if the Baker commission has accomplished nothing, however. Although its recommendations will have no effect on American policy going forward, they have already had a very damaging effect throughout the world, and especially in the Middle East and in Iraq. For the Iraq Study Group, aided by supportive American media, has successfully conveyed the impression to everyone at home and abroad that the United States is about to withdraw from Iraq. This has weakened American allies and strengthened American enemies. It has exacerbated the problems in Iraq, as all the various factions in that country begin to prepare for the "inevitable" American retreat. Now it will require enormous efforts by the president and his advisers to dispel the disastrous impression that the Baker commission has quite deliberately created and will continue to foster in the weeks ahead. At home and abroad, people have been led to believe that Jim Baker and not the president was going to call the shots in Iraq from now on.

Happily, that is not the case. Although neither the American media nor many observers of the American political scene seem to realize it, there is nothing the Baker commission can do to force Bush to take a different course than the one he chooses. Nor is it easy for a Democratic majority in Congress to call the shots in Iraq. In the American system, the president always has enormous authority in foreign policy, if he wants to exercise it. President Bush clearly does. He intends to pursue steadfastly his own course in Iraq. He is determined not to withdraw before it becomes stable and, yes, democratic. He will not be buffeted by conventional wisdom or by Baker and his colleagues, no matter how much they employ public relations tactics to defeat him.

Yet there is one "power broker" that still matters: the American public. Unfortunately, and dangerously, the president appears to have largely lost their confidence. Certainly, the election results were a strong signal that Americans are unhappy with the war in Iraq. At the same time, we were struck by exit polls that showed the public was equally concerned with a too precipitous pullout from Iraq, suggesting the American people know quite well what is at stake in the war there. Many Americans, it would seem, are still open to a plan for Iraq that has a chance of working—if the president acts soon. If not, no matter how strong a position he has constitutionally, he will not be able to sustain his Iraq policy.

We remain dissatisfied with the way the president has allowed his Pentagon and top military officers to persist in what has proved to be an ineffective strategy in Iraq. We hope that he will now take the steps necessary to accomplish his stated objectives in Iraq, including a substantial increase in the number of U.S. forces in Baghdad and throughout the contested parts of the country, as well as a long overdue increase in the total size of American ground forces so that higher force levels in Iraq can be sustained. But right now we can only applaud the president's courage and determination and his willingness to resist the pressures of those who would now sound the retreat.

—Robert Kagan and William Kristol

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Moxie in the Executive

How not to be a lame duck.

BY FRED BARNES

IN DEALING WITH the new Democratic Congress, President Bush is said to have a big choice to make. To get anything done, he either has to compromise with Democrats or ally himself with an as-yet-unformed majority coalition of Republicans and moderate-to-conservative Democrats. But there's a third option: take bold moves on his own, based on his presidential powers.

The president, stung by the defeat of Republicans in the midterm election, may be reluctant to step out on his own. The safer tack would be to negotiate with Congress to pass legislation in hopes of enhancing the legacy of his presidency. That's the normal exit strategy for presidents.

But Bush has little to lose and much to gain by acting on his own. His legacy will be determined largely by the outcome in Iraq and in the war on terror—and we may not know that verdict for years. Congressional passage of a compromise measure on, say, immigration or education reform would be nice, but neither is likely to affect his legacy in a major way. So why not be bold and go unilateral?

Here are ways the president can do just that. All they require is maximum moxie.

* **Fire generals.** President Lincoln did this in the Civil War and, once he put General Grant in charge, got results. Lincoln held his generals accountable. When they failed, he replaced them. Bush's generals have failed to come close to achieving their most important task: pacifying Baghdad. His attitude is, if they're wrong, I'm wrong. It should be, if they fail, they go.

* **Keep John Bolton as American ambassador to the United Nations.** Democrats can block his confirmation by filibuster, but they can't stop Bush from giving Bolton a job at the State Department and then assigning him to the United Nations, where he's the most effective ambassador since the days of Jeane Kirkpatrick and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. This is a no-brainer, assuming Bolton is willing.

* **Stop earmarks.** These special interest spending measures are an invitation to corruption. And they add significantly to overspending by Congress. Without a line-item veto, the president can't single out earmarks for destruction. What he could do, however, is announce that he will veto any appropriations bill that contains earmarks. Congress would squeal, but it would probably back down if Bush stuck to his guns.

* **Give judicial nominees recess appointments.** Bush did this with judges Charles Pickering and Bill Pryor. Now he could give recess appointments to all his U.S. appeals court nominees, some eight of them, whom Democrats refuse to give floor votes. The judges' terms would run out at the end of the new Congress in late 2008. But even in that short period of time, their impact would be felt.

* **Talk up the military option in Iran.** Not with a public announcement, but in leaks. The Iranians seem to believe that they're home free in pursuing nuclear weapons with American forces tied down in Iraq. But we're not tied down. The destruction of Iranian nuclear sites would be carried out by airpower. Leaking the details of a contingency plan for doing this would provoke international debate and put the mullahs in a less truculent mood.

* **Apply the Kennedy model to North Korea.** Columnist Charles Krauthammer urged the president to repeat the warning that President Kennedy gave to the Soviets after they installed missiles in Cuba aimed at the United States. "It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union," Kennedy declared in 1962. Bush could update this with Kim Jong Il, telling him if a rogue nuke hits the United States or its allies, the United States will hit North Korea. That should deter him.

* **Push a radical energy independence plan.** Bush may need Congress's assent on this one, or at least on parts of it. But the idea would be to try everything conceivable, all at once, to free the United States from strategic dependence on Middle East oil and from the possibility of a crippling cutoff imposed by America's foes. Both liberal notions (higher CAFE standards) and conservative ones (more domestic oil produc-

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

What is the West?

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tion), plus fuel diversification, lucrative subsidies for hybrid autos, more spending on research, and massive energy exploration would be included.

⋆ **A final gift to the world.** As Bush is leaving office in January 2009, he could implement the military option and take out all of Iran's nuclear facilities. The world would be aghast—but also relieved and, without admitting it, enormously grateful. The new president would have one less crisis to deal with. So would the United Nations. Terrorists might respond, but we could brace for that. Anything they did would pale next to a nuclear attack by Iran.

So there's a lot Bush or any president could do if he's willing to be audacious. More than most presidents, Bush has been willing (and often eager) to thumb his nose at the Washington elites and break out on his own. He'll have a perfect opportunity to do this again in his final two years in the White House—and in even more daring ways. It might give his legacy a boost, too. ♦

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Benedict Meets Bartholomew

The real reason for the pope's visit to Turkey.

BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

As communism was to Pope John Paul II, so radical Islam is to Pope Benedict XVI—the most pressing geopolitical problem of his time, of course, but also something more: a test of whether Catholicism is going to buttress the moral, political, and intellectual struggle against a violent and tyrannical ideology, or whether the Church is going to go squishy.

At first glance, the pope's four-day trip to Turkey last week makes the answer look like squish. Newspapers around the globe announced that the pope had barely gotten off the plane in Ankara before he told Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan that he now considers Islam "a religion of peace." What's more, he is reported to have said that the Vatican will no longer oppose the admission of Turkey to the European Union.

Off he then went to a lecture hall, sitting quietly and apparently undisturbed while Ali Bardakoglu, the head of the Turkish government's religious-affairs office, introduced him by denouncing those who did not understand the "vast tolerance of Islam"—a tolerance that wears dangerously thin, Bardakoglu warned, when people attempt to "demonstrate the superiority of their own beliefs" with discussions of "the theology of religions" or claim that Islam "was spread over the world by swords."

Bardakoglu's words were widely understood to be what, in fact, they were: an open continuation of the attack on Benedict XVI for his negative depiction of Islam in his September 12 lecture at Regensburg, Germany. "Pope, don't make a mistake, don't wear out our patience," Islamic activists shouted when they occupied the Haghia Sophia to protest Benedict's visit. And in response to Bardakoglu's undiplomatic ambush, the pope read a diplomatic speech, all about how Christians and Muslims are brothers who "believe and confess to one God, even if in different ways." Indeed, he added, Turkey "is very kind to Christians," and he quoted John Paul II on the need for Christians and Muslims to "develop the spiritual bonds that unite them."

By the time he was photographed praying in a mosque and waving a Turkish flag, Benedict seemed to have managed little but to make nice and surrender on every point—all to undo the damage done when his Regensburg address was followed by anti-Catholic and anti-Western riots across the Islamic world. "Pope Visit Eclipses Image of Anti-Turk Islamophobe," ran a typical headline as the papal trip to Turkey wound down to its dull conclusion.

Well, maybe. It's difficult to say what else Benedict should have done. The journey to Turkey was intended to be about Eastern Orthodoxy, not Islam. From the genocidal destruction of the Armenians by the Turks during World War I, to the enforced atheism of the Soviets, and down to the rise of Islamic nationalism, the last hundred years have been brutal to Christianity in the East. The ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople—Bartholomew I, bishop of the highest and most famous see in the Orthodox Church—has only 3,000 people left in

Joseph Bottum, a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *is editor of* First Things.

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his diocese. His seminary has been padlocked by the government since 1971, his few converts are subject to prosecution under Article 301 of the penal code that prohibits "insulting Turkishness," and his flock has been squeezed into a small corner of Istanbul by the official secularism of the Turkish government on one side and radical Islam on the other.

Still, Bartholomew represents the world's Orthodox in a way no one else can, and it was primarily to advance the dialogue between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Catholicism that the pope arranged his visit to Turkey. And then Islam got in the way.

Bartholomew and Benedict

AFP / Getty Images

Benedict's Regensburg talk and the Muslim reaction massively changed how the long-scheduled trip would be perceived. Given the change, Benedict could hardly do more than make diplomatic noises to his hosts about Islam and go on to his meetings with Bartholomew. Besides, he actually believes most of what he said—except, perhaps, the part about Turkey being "very kind to Christians": It was in Turkey, after all, that a Catholic priest was murdered last February for the crime of being Christian, and during one of his public appearances with Bartholomew, Benedict referred to the 1915 slaughter of the Armenian Christians (even to call it genocide is a crime under Turkish law).

In fact, the pope seems genuinely to think that some "spiritual bonds" might unite Christians and Muslims. John Paul II was, by training, a philosopher, while Benedict is, at root, a theologian. And for Christian theologians, the question of Islam is a knotty one: Is it a Christian heresy, as the last Church Father, John of Damascus, thought? Is it an entirely separate religion, like Hinduism? Or a related one, like Judaism? Still, despite their very different understandings of human dignity and the role of free will and rationality in God's plan, pious and serious Muslims manifestly seek the divine. For Benedict XVI, Islam itself is not the problem.

Even the terrorism and political tyranny of radical Islam may not be the problem, in the pope's view. After the riots and protests and endless editorials denouncing Benedict, we can forget that the reference to the violent history of Islam constituted only a small portion of what he said at Regensburg. Through most of the lecture, he spoke instead of European history and his worries about the decline of belief in reason throughout Western culture.

This is a well-worn theme for Benedict: In his first papal address, he warned against the relativism and nihilism that has seized much of the modern world. Not the existence of violent Islamic political movements, perhaps, but certainly the *success* of those movements is an effect of something deeper happening outside the Muslim world. The pope's analysis seems to come down to this: Radical Islam ascendant is a symptom. Western hollowness is the disease.

Can this be right? In many ways, it looks implausible. Inheriting the rhetoric of twentieth-century anticolonialism, figures from Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to al Qaeda's Osama bin Laden condemn the West precisely for its arrogant confidence, from the Crusades to British imperialism and on to American economic and military might. How would they hate us less if we grew more certain of ourselves?

And yet, in other ways, Benedict XVI's analysis has real power. Just as the collapse of European birthrates allowed and even required the immigration of huge numbers of Islamic workers, so nihilism and self-hatred provided an opportunity for radical Islamic political movements to push hard against the West. The moral and intellectual weakness of Western culture encouraged tyrannical governments to flourish in the Middle East, backward cultures to be affirmed as authentic by Western intellectuals, and terrorists to believe that victory was possible.

In that context, the pope's work in Turkey—calling Muslims to share a commitment to peace, drawing together the remnants of the ancient Christian communities, refusing to repeat the Regensburg provocation—looks quite different from what it appears at first glance. It may be the boldest proposal any figure on the geopolitical stage has yet made. In any event, it's a long way from squishy. ♦

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From Metternich to Jim Baker

The high price of restoring the *ancien régime*.

BY RALPH PETERS

The superannuated membership of the Iraq Study Group shepherded by former secretary of state James Baker conjures a line from the film *The Sixth Sense*: "I see dead people." Two centuries ago, Europeans dreaming of reform and freedom must have felt just as crestfallen as they watched their continent's ghoulish elder statesmen gather for the Congress of Vienna. Both assemblies symbolize a victory for the *ancien régime*, the bloody-minded refusal to accept that the world has changed profoundly and will continue to change.

If the Baker commission is the K-Mart version of the Congress of Vienna, its influence may prove no less pernicious. Baker is the dean emeritus of a reactionary school of diplomats—inaccurately labeled "realists"—whose support of the shah of Iran, the Saudi royal family, Anwar Sadat, then Hosni Mubarak, and, not least, Saddam Hussein delivered short-term stability that proved illusory in the long run. It was the "realist" elevation of stability above all other strategic factors—echoing Prince Metternich—that gave us not only the radical regime in Iran, but, ultimately, al Qaeda and 9/11.

The leading modern practitioner of this profoundly reactionary approach to international relations was, of course, Henry Kissinger, whose doctoral thesis championed the diplomats and heads of state who redivided Europe into reform-school states after Napoleon's defeat. A classic revisionist, Kissinger ignored the wisdom of 19th century observers who recognized that the oppression sponsored by the Congress of Vienna created only a mockery of peace. The century of Biedermeier sensibilities and Victorian manners was, in fact, punctuated by a long series of failed—and often grisly—revolutions that radicalized those who found the status quo unbearable. The *Staatsordnung* of the day created the cult of political assassinations that haunts us still. Metternich and his peers induced the social forced labor that gave birth to Marx and all the utopian extremists who came afterward. From the lesser figures, such as Kropotkin or Bakunin, down to Lenin and Hitler, the political distortions of the "orderly" 19th century led to the unprecedented bloodbaths of the 20th century.

The Kissinger school amplified our Cold War support for authoritarian and even dictatorial regimes, deforming the Middle East as Metternich, Talleyrand, Nesselrode, Castlereagh, Wellington, and their lesser contemporaries crippled Europe. For his part, Baker argued—wrongly—that Saddam Hussein should be spared in the wake of Desert Storm; tried to persuade the Soviet Union to remain whole after its comprehensive collapse; and pretended against the increasingly gory evidence that Yugoslavia could be preserved as a unified state. He tolerated Saddam's savage suppression of a Shia revolt we incited, and only grudgingly—and belatedly—acquiesced in our protection of Kurdish refugees.

One of the many tragedies of our experience in Iraq is that the incompetence of the Bush administration's occupation policy has obscured the *necessity* of igniting change in the Middle East. Removing Saddam Hussein from power was both an intelligent act and a moral one. But the aftermath was so badly botched that many in Washington now long—as did those powdered cynics in Vienna—for the status quo antebellum. They would renew our commitment to Saudi Arabia and other autocracies, while quietly selling out the Lebanese, the Kurds, and the region's moderates in order to get us out of Iraq. We would return to a version of the old order and *might* gain a brief respite from our troubles in the region. But the greater effects of a renewed stability-*über-alles* doctrine would play into the recruitment schemes of the most radical Islamist elements in the region, while instigating human rights violations on a breathtaking scale. We would throw away any hope of a better future for a brief timeout today.

Stability at any price isn't the answer. Stability imposed from above empowered Khomeini and bin Laden as surely as it did the 19th century revolutionaries and nihilists who became the 20th century's nationalists, demagogues, and mass murderers. Terror is an inevitable by-product of all grand clampdowns.

The statesmen of the Congress of Vienna sought to turn back history's tide, and their philosophical heirs on the Baker panel are trying to do the same. Democrat or Republican, superficially liberal or conservative, the Iraq Study Group is deeply reactionary. Its recommendations, which will be couched in terms of "sensible" *Realpolitik*, envision an impossible restoration of a peaceful Middle East that never existed. No matter the politically correct language in which it may be couched, the group's fundamental recommendation will be to return to a foreign policy in which the quest for stability trumps freedom, ignores human rights, frustrates the will of ordinary people, and violates elementary decency. By resisting change, the study group will only make the changes that do come

Ralph Peters is a retired military officer, columnist, and the author of 21 books, including the recent Never Quit the Fight.

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to the Middle East even more explosive and anti-American.

The Middle East problem was difficult enough when the Bush administration stood for a benevolent revolution in possibilities against a range of reactionary enemies, from al Qaeda and Shia militias to various Baathist regimes and the apocalyptic nihilists ruling Iran. For all of the administration's practical ineptitude, its recognition that the Middle East could not continue in its current state was correct. Now we verge on a new clash of civilizations that will oppose our reactionaries to their reactionaries. It is a formula not for stability and peace, but for brutal conflict and spectacular terrorism.

The 19th century was far bloodier within Europe than historical glosses pretend, yet the political order the Congress of Vienna sought to preserve in amber did last, more or less, until 1914, when the inevitable explosion came on a massive scale. But history marches double time today, and any attempt to effect a restoration of rigid, top-down order in the Middle East will fail far more rapidly than did the Concert of Europe. Yesterday's solutions—Jim Baker's solutions—didn't work yesterday. They certainly won't work today.

Since the end of the Cold War, every one of our military engagements has come in response to failing states and flawed borders: Desert Storm, Somalia, Haiti, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq . . . we send our men and women in uniform to defend a world designed in Berlin and Versailles according to the macabre political philosophy of Metternich. The greatest democracy in history has been conned by its own political elite into fighting for the cartographic legacy of dead czars, kings, kaisers, and emperors.

The Iraq Study Group's members will assure each other of their conscientiousness, while carefully guarding their legacies for future biographers and historians. And the group's recommendations will suggest, in one form or another, a return to the *ancien régime*.

Of course, the salient difference between the Congress of Vienna and the Iraq Study Group is obvious: The diplomats of the former had just achieved a military victory, while the members of the latter seek to avert a strategic defeat. The freedom of action that the Baker commission might imagine for itself is illusory.

There are no good solutions to Iraq, but some "solutions" are markedly worse than others. Any formula that attempts to extend the lives of dictatorships and oligarchies at the expense of already restive populations will end in disaster—even should it promise us the illusion of a "decent interval." ♦

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Surge and Run?

More troops is only part of the answer.

BY TOM DONNELLY

It just hasn't worked out the way the punditocracy planned: The "adults" of the Bush 41 administration were supposed to talk Bush 43 off the ledge, get him to give up his dream of democracy in Iraq and return to reality. But the main recommendation of the Baker-Hamilton "Iraq Study Group"—withdrawal by early 2008, covered by negotiations with Iran and Syria—has little value outside Washington, and none in Baghdad or the region. The president declared he has no interest in a "graceful exit [that] just simply has no realism to it at all," forcing one study group member to lament: "He's a true believer."

So what now?

At long last, the Bush administration appears willing to consider increasing the size of the U.S. force in Iraq. The White House has been floating rumors to this effect, especially since the announcement that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was stepping down, but last week the *New York Times* produced the smoking gun: In a November 8 memo, National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley suggested the "need to fill the four-brigade gap in Baghdad with coalition forces" and that it might be a good idea to "ask [the] Secretary of Defense and General [George] Casey [the top U.S. commander in Iraq] to make a recommendation about whether more forces are need[ed] in Baghdad."

At the Pentagon, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Peter Pace, is running a military version of the Iraq Study Group. While the Pace review is likely to produce a range of options rather than recommendations, one will be a "surge option." The 12-man group reportedly wants to increase the number of American trainers in Iraqi units rather than U.S. combat units. But for the first time since the invasion, there is serious talk of increasing the size of the force in Iraq.

But what, exactly, makes a surge? Hadley's "four-brigade gap in Baghdad" would mean, at minimum, putting about 14,000 more troops in the capital. Would these be transferred from other hot spots in Iraq, or deployed from the United States? The Pace "surge option" of 20,000 troops, on top of the 145,000 in Iraq, is roughly consistent with Hadley's thinking.

As important as the size of the surge is how long it will last. The greatest danger is that an increase in troop levels morphs into a policy of "surge and run." The Washington establishment almost uniformly regards the war as lost; the insurgents have nearly won the war inside the Beltway. The would-be Wise Men are lining up behind the withdrawal proposals of the Baker-Hamilton commission in the belief that bipartisanship is the essence of strategy. On cue, Sen. Christopher Dodd last week predicted that "there may be a growing bipartisan support in this country for what Jim Baker, Lee Hamilton [and] the other members of that commission have put together."

Thus, the president must insist on a surge-and-sustain effort for the remainder of his term. It won't be easy. American domestic support for the war in Iraq is at bottom. The Democratic majority in Congress and, perhaps more important, a dazed, confused, and angry Republican minority, will have to be dealt with. The Democrats may lack the nerve to force a retreat from Iraq, but wavering Republicans might feel a greater sense of urgency.

The situation in Iraq is hardly better. The Iraqi government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki is weak, internally divided, and fighting a pitiless enemy. As the Hadley memo puts it, "[T]he reality on the streets of Baghdad suggests Maliki is either ignorant of what is going on, misrepresenting his intentions, or that his capabilities are not yet sufficient to turn his good intentions into action." Any way you slice it, without extra American help, the effort to create a self-sustaining government in Baghdad is near collapse. Maliki's assertion that the Iraqi army could assume full control of operations by next June is fantasy.

A six-month surge of the sort now being discussed in Washington would certainly help tamp down violence in Baghdad. And securing Baghdad, quickly and firmly, is essential if the Iraqi government is to survive. But "the reality on the streets" demands a longer commitment: The war can be lost in the next six months, but it cannot be won in the next six months.

Much will depend on the president himself. He will have to take drastic steps, not delegate them to subordinates: insist on a strategy to secure Baghdad and generals who can achieve that goal; call on the active Army and Marine Corps to make greater sacrifices; mobilize a larger proportion of the National Guard and reserves; spend tens of billions to recruit, train, and equip larger land forces for the duration. He will need to summon every power of the commander in chief as well as mount the bully pulpit.

To burn away the inside-the-Beltway gloom, there will also need to be visible signs of progress in Iraq, and soon. Without some good news from the front, and especially a sense of security in Baghdad, what's left of American and Iraqi political will could evaporate rapidly. A troop surge is necessary to stave off defeat; a larger surge is better than a small one; a long surge is better than a short one. It's hard to win a long war with a small force. ♦

Tom Donnelly is a senior adviser in the international security program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

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Putin, in London, with Poison

Who killed Alexander Litvinenko?

BY JEFFREY GEDMIN

London

Among the thousands of customers at the Piccadilly branch of their restaurant in recent weeks, there had not been a single instance of illness. That's what Itsu's website was reporting last week—"with the exception," Itsu noted parenthetically, "of Mr. Litvinenko." Alexander Litvinenko was the ex-KGB man who, after dining at the London sushi restaurant on November 1, fell ill, lost his hair, and died.

I passed by Itsu a couple days ago. It's down the street from the famous tea shop Fortnum and Mason. There wasn't much to see, as the place had been boarded up by the time I arrived. At the Millennium Hotel at Grosvenor Square, on the other hand, the lobby was bustling. There was seasonal music. Staff members were putting up Christmas trees. It was late afternoon and the bar was full. "Be careful what you eat in there," my cab driver had advised.

This is another location where British investigators suspect Litvinenko might have been poisoned. Authorities may be reluctant to call it a murder investigation—it's still classified as an "unexplained death" as we go to press—but it does not seem unreasonable to suspect foul play. Litvinenko apparently ingested or inhaled polonium-210, a radioactive material that emits highly hazardous alpha particles. It is considerably stronger than cyanide and in the right dosage quickly damages tissues and organs. The British tabloid the *Sun* calls it a case of "From Russia with Lunch."

Jeffrey Gedmin is director of the Aspen Institute Berlin and a columnist for Die Welt.

By now everybody has his own theory about Litvinenko's sudden death. Since I arrived in London, police have found traces of polonium-210 at 12 different locations including two British Airways planes. As authorities continue to collect clues, it is already evident that observers of the case tend to fall into one of two camps.

To the first camp belong those who see Russian president Vladimir Putin and Moscow's security services as prime suspects. The 43-year-old Litvinenko, a onetime colonel in the FSB, the KGB's successor organization, was a fierce critic of Putin's. Litvinenko fled to Britain in November 2000 after claiming that he had been ordered by superiors to assassinate exiled Russian oligarch Boris Berezovsky. Since that time, the former agent, who had begun to work for Berezovsky in Britain, never stopped being a thorn in the Kremlin's side.

At the time of his death, Litvinenko was investigating the murder of another Putin critic, journalist Anna Politkovskaya, whose body was found in October in the elevator of her apartment building in central Moscow. She had been shot four times, including once in the head, in what appeared to be a contract killing. In 2002 Litvinenko coauthored a book (with pal Yuri Felshtinsky) titled *Blowing up Russia: Terror from Within*, in which he argued that Putin was behind the 1999 blasts in apartment blocks in Moscow that killed 300 and were blamed on Chechen separatists. The incident triggered the second Chechen war and helped to propel Putin into office.

The logic driving "Camp I" seems compelling. Putin's regime has engaged in a fairly robust crackdown on independent journalists, trouble-making NGOs, and other critics the last few years. This past summer the Russian parliament, the Duma, passed legislation granting the government authority to take action through the use of "special forces" against enemies of the state abroad.

If Putin himself was not directly involved in signing the order to eliminate Litvinenko, it is not difficult to imagine that FSB agents, perhaps with the Kremlin's tacit approval, wanted to liquidate him. Artemy Troitsky, one of Russia's leading music and cultural journalists, considers this a plausible scenario. Troitsky writes in the current issue of the *New Statesman* that "the FSB . . . considers punishing traitors a basic principle." I phoned ex-dissident Natan Sharansky at his home in Jerusalem earlier this week to chat about the case and see what he thinks. Sharansky concurs. If the Russian security services were behind this, he told me, then "this was about discipline."

There is a second camp, though. To this camp belong those who espouse a hodgepodge of theories, from the speculation that Litvinenko was a victim of rival Chechen factions to the assertion peddled by Kremlin circles and Russian media that Berezovsky himself was behind his employee's death. According to this theory, Berezovsky had Litvinenko killed so that the Kremlin would be implicated and Putin's image would be dealt a vicious blow.

A variation on this theme has been introduced by the *Independent*. The paper has suggested that Litvinenko may have killed himself, convinced that Putin would be suspected of ordering the hit. From his death bed at University College Hospital, Litvinenko explicitly accused Putin of the poisoning.

There are a few voices hinting that Litvinenko was killed by his friend Mario Scaramella, an Italian security consultant with whom he lunched at Itsu on November 1. Scaramella is said to have brought to lunch that day a hit list with the names of Kremlin targets, including his own name

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Police in London investigate the poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko, pictured at right before he fell ill.

and Litvinenko's. To complicate this theory, Scaramella has since tested positive for polonium-210.

There are some in Camp II—let's call it the anyone-but-Moscow camp—who seem hellbent on keeping Putin out of this. In truth, if Litvinenko's death is traced to Moscow, we all have a problem.

George W. Bush once gazed into Putin's eyes and saw sincerity and a good soul. Meanwhile, our less sentimental European friends have been busy investing heavily in an ever expanding energy relationship with the Russians. The E.U. now relies on Russia for 25 percent of its gas, a figure estimated to rise to nearly 70 percent in the next 15 years. Germany is leading the way. Former chancellor Gerhard Schröder now serves as chairman of Nord Stream, a joint venture linked to Russia's state-controlled energy giant Gazprom, which is overseeing the construction of a new Russian pipeline that will supply Germany through the Baltic Sea.

Some circles would find it exceedingly inconvenient to read headlines confirming that Russia is now in the business of wiping out critics in Western capitals. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* likes the Berezovsky-as-villain theory. Berlin's well-respected Inforadio just aired an interview with a former head of German intelligence, Heribert Hellenbroich, who leans in the same direction.

Hellenbroich insists that Moscow could not have been involved in Litvinenko's death. The method was too unusual, the hit too indiscreet. Talk about unusual. Inforadio neglected to mention to listeners that Hellenbroich was head of West German intelligence a while ago—21 years to be exact—and that he managed to keep his job for only four weeks before being forced to resign when one of his top aides defected to East Berlin.

The whole mystery surrounding Litvinenko's death is probably ultimately beside the point. Does it really matter who killed him? A British journalist friend thinks this will be a tipping point if it turns out Putin is the culprit. If the Russians are running around wiping out dissidents like this, can it still be okay that Putin gets invited to Jacques Chirac's birthday parties and Russia gets to chair G-8 meetings?

I worry about two things. The first is something Sharansky told me this week. If the Kremlin sponsored Litvinenko's murder, then Putin would have calculated a good dose of Western indignation into his cost-benefit analysis. "Putin knows the West," says Sharansky. "He probably figures the indignation will pass." Sadly, Sharansky may be right. The U.N. has essentially concluded that the Syrians assassinated former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri, and the fact hasn't made one iota of difference for Western policy.

The other thing that bothers me is why we would need a tipping point in the first place. Haven't we already learned enough these past few years to know that Russia is heading in the wrong direction? ♦

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A NATO for Asia

Helping South Korea despite itself.

BY ELLEN BORK AND GARY SCHMITT

A BIT OF HISTORY COMES to mind in the wake of South Korean president Roh's refusal delivered at the recent APEC summit in Hanoi to sign up as a full participant in the Proliferation Security Initiative, the U.S.-led effort to prevent North Korea from trafficking in weapons of mass destruction.

In November 1983, the West German parliament voted to approve the deployment on German soil of medium-range Pershing II missiles as a deterrent to the Soviet Union's SS-20s. The Bundestag's approval, on a relatively close vote, came despite large antimissile demonstrations and broad public support for continued negotiations with the Soviet Union.

Both Chancellor Helmut Kohl and former chancellor Helmut Schmidt strongly supported the deployment. To be sure, in advance of the vote, Schmidt criticized the Reagan administration's "missionary ideological course" and defended dialogue with Moscow—but he then implored his party to "force themselves to be rational" and support deployment. The Social Democrats "cannot influence anyone to reason and moderation if the Soviet Union can exploit our actions and at the same time the people of the United States feel they have been left in the lurch," he argued.

Even allowing for his criticisms of the United States, Schmidt felt strongly about his country's mutual security obligations as a member of NATO and the difference between the totalitarian state on his border and the democratic friend that deterred it.

The same cannot be said of South Korea. In recent years, despite the tens of thousands of American troops there and the U.S. commitment to help defend it, South Korea has reacted to North Korea's nuclear program, missile tests, and grotesque human rights abuses with little concern for U.S. policy initiatives either toward North Korea or the security of the region. Now, South Korea's refusal to participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative raises the question: Would Seoul behave differently if Asia, like Europe, had a regional security organization committed to the survival of freedom and democracy?

Currently, our Asian security arrangements run along bilateral lines from regional capitals to Washington. For decades, the conventional wisdom has been that this "hub and spokes" structure works well enough and that the multilateral system that has safeguarded Europe's security for decades would not work in Asia. Speaking of the applicability of a NATO-like organization for the region in 2002, then Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz said, "East Asia's a very, very different situation [from Europe], where the diversity of countries, the diversity of interests doesn't call for that kind of structure."

Asia's supposed "diversity of interests" generally refers to lingering anger over Japan's wartime aggression and brutality. Certainly, visits to the Yasukuni war shrine by Japanese leaders have hardly helped put those animosities to rest; indeed, they have given Beijing, in particular, a tool to stoke anti-Japanese fires throughout the region. Moreover, when NATO was being built, its core consisted of democracies like Great Britain, France, and West Germany. In contrast, Washington's key Asian allies at the time were more of a mixed lot: defeated Japan and democratic Australia on the one hand, authoritarian South Korea and the Republic of China on the other.

The situation of course has changed since them. A wave of democratization that began in the 1980s swept up the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan. Indonesia has joined the democratic club as well.

New security problems have also emerged. In addition to the nuclear and missile threat posed by North Korea, China's economic growth has enabled it to develop a military capacity that now not only threatens Taiwan but is of growing concern to Japan and East Asia as a whole.

None of these momentous changes is reflected in Asia's multilateral organizations, which downplay the importance of democratic principles and emphasize trade and talk instead. Not surprisingly, Washington's efforts to have these organizations take on security roles are so far largely unproductive. In the meantime, China has begun to assert a regional leadership role which increasingly comes at the expense of the United States.

The objection that Asia's past is an obstacle to updating the region's security arrangements misses the point. In fact, tension between Japan and other countries in the region—especially in light of Tokyo's desire to revise its pacifist constitution and take on a greater role in global security affairs—can be best managed by enmeshing Japan in a multilateral alliance of democracies.

Other problems would also be best solved within such a framework. For example, the incentives and constraints of an alliance structure could help Indonesia to transform its military into a transparent, humane force under civilian control. Much in the

Ellen Bork is deputy executive director of the Project for the New American Century and Gary Schmitt is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

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manner of NATO (and the European Union of recent years), such an alliance would serve as a magnet to countries that have not yet democratized and could help to prevent backsliding in those that have, be they Thailand or the Philippines.

The historical parallels between West Germany in the 1980s and South Korea today are striking: Both had a population divided between a ruthless totalitarian system and a free, democratic society; anti-American sentiment runs strong in both, especially among the young. Both also have leaders who must strike a difficult balance between their publics and their international obligations.

The major difference may be that one belonged to an alliance committed to safeguarding a free society with the help of its loyal friends, while the other sees its alliance with the United States as serving little more than a set of interests narrowly conceived. ♦

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An Army of 50 Million?

The surpassingly dishonest draft debate.

BY WINSTON GROOM

One of the most cynical political tricks played in the 2004 presidential campaign was the false rumor, started by Democrats, that if George W. Bush was reelected, he secretly planned to reinstate the military draft. Clearly, this was aimed at striking fear into the American student population and their frightened mothers, in order to mobilize them to go out and vote for the antiwar candidate, John Kerry.

Of course there was no truth to the Bush draft rumor, which nevertheless whipped across the Internet, and then onto cable news talk shows and into newspaper columns. Fact was, at the time, there were two bills before Congress to restore the draft, but both were sponsored by liberal Democrats—Charles Rangel in the House and Ernest "Fritz" Hollings in the Senate. No Republicans supported them, and certainly not the Bush administration.

Rangel had started on his project a year earlier, when he made a series of baseless charges to the media claiming that the U.S. military was filled with a disproportionate number of blacks and Hispanics who were being sent overseas to die in Iraq while white youths were safe in their schools and colleges. When all statistics proved this assumption false, Rangel changed his tune and proclaimed that the draft should be renewed, coupled with a requirement of universal national service, so that all draft-age citizens would be required "to serve their country"—a laudable notion on its face, but a screwball idea from a practical point of view.

When it failed to push Kerry over the top, the idea looked like it had died the quiet death that it deserved. Instead, Rangel has succeeded in stirring the whole thing up again—this time as incoming chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee. Many of Rangel's own party view his idea of renewed conscription with a wary eye, including Democratic speaker-designate Nancy Pelosi, who drolly characterized it as "a way to make a point" about social inequality.

Politics aside, let's look at why so-called "universal military service" is a nutty idea: Presently there are about 50 million American men and women of draft age, between 18 and 28, with about 5 million more reaching draft age every year. (One must assume that women would be drafted equally with the men; in these times, how could they not be?) Now just ask yourselves: What on earth would the U.S. military do with all these people? They would all have to be housed, fed, clothed, transported, schooled, counseled, medically cared for—and you'd have to pay them something, wouldn't you? Otherwise they'd be slaves. Those costs alone would dwarf all the current entitlement programs in America.

And how could they even be trained and supplied? (At the very peak of World War II, the largest war in history, the U.S. military had about 16 million service men and women, and our relative taxes were higher than they had ever been.) And what about this: Presently there aren't nearly enough training tools—tanks and other military vehicles, planes,

Winston Groom is the author of Forrest Gump *and 14 other books, including four military histories.*

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ships, artillery pieces, missiles, rifles and other weapons, communications devices, etc., let alone instructors—to possibly begin to instruct and equip all those millions of people in the armed forces.

So an additional taxpayer expense would, by necessity, be to multiply all of our present military bases (just when we're trying to get rid of as many of these dinosaurs as possible) as well as to multiply all the above-mentioned equipment by about 500 percent. And we would go positively broke doing it, just as the Russians did.

Even assuming this vast horde of 50 million—or let's just say half of that, 25 million, by the time you've weeded out people for one reason or another—were all uniformed, trained, and ready to go fight, the question then becomes: Where is it they would go, and with whom would they fight?

Fortunately, the threat of huge global land conflicts such as World War II, or some great war in Europe with the Soviet Union or in Asia against Communist China, has faded into oblivion. As it did, military planners tailored our fighting forces to the all-volunteer professional military we have today.

Therefore, we would be left with this: Millions of newly drafted servicemen and women, languishing around U.S. bases, grousing about their two years of conscripted service, instead of being able to educate themselves or find useful and productive jobs.

Rangel and his followers suggest that maybe those who didn't want to fight could be put in some sort of Civilian Service Corps. And what exactly would they do? Maybe they would come out and mow my lawn, but I doubt it.

Possibly what these draft-renewal advocates have in mind, instead of the ridiculous notion of enlisting everybody of draft age, is some kind of return to the old end-of-the-Vietnam-war-era "draft lottery." Under this system, males (and now presumably females, too) upon reaching the age of 18 would each get a number and the highest numbers would be the only ones conscripted, as the military's needs dictated. But that would even be worse. To muster the 1.5 million active servicemen now on duty, you would only be conscripting about one percent of those draftees of eligible age. Some "universal service" that is!

And wouldn't those million or two young folks whose luck was to find themselves conscripted resent being dragooned into the military while the vast majority of their friends or classmates got the chance to go on with their lives and get ahead of them? What kind of soldiers, sailors, airmen, or Marines would they make? Especially since the two years of active duty Rangel is calling for would scarcely afford enough time to acquire the raw basics of the new and complicated military science.

Rangel and his followers suggest that maybe those who didn't want to fight could be put in some sort of Civilian Service Corps. And what exactly would they do?

Any way you look at it, if there is a renewed draft, the only fair and sensible way will be to go ahead and conscript everybody who is physically and mentally eligible. And then we, the American people, will be up to our eyeballs in superfluous and ineffectual military personnel at a stupendous and wasteful cost to the taxpayers—and to achieve what? Forced patriotism? Social engineering?

The U.S. military's mission has changed dramatically. I served as an officer in Vietnam, 1966-67, mostly with the First Brigade of the Fourth Infantry Division (the very same brigade that finally captured Saddam Hussein, I'm proud to say). But one thing I learned was that too many of the drafted soldiers did not perform as well as those who had volunteered. Quite a few of them didn't want to be there, and their attitudes showed it; a lot of them wound up in the stockade. Their hearts just weren't in it—and who could blame them? They would likely have fought hard and well in a "popular war" such as World War II, but Vietnam wasn't popular, and most felt they had been victims of the bad luck of the draw.

What has happened since World War II, Korea, and Vietnam is that the military has become highly technical and specialized. The insides of a Vietnam-era tank looked pretty much like an enclosed bulldozer. Today, the insides of our main battle tank look like the control room of the Starship Enterprise, and it takes years of specialized training to work the thing properly. Same goes for the complicated machinery of "smart bombs," missiles, and electronics in the Navy and Air Force. And just about the time our new conscripts finally got the hang of it, their obligation would be up and we'd have to start all over again.

The American public apparently is not long willing to accept high battle casualties, and the only way to achieve this in modern combat is through the use of highly sophisticated weapons that take years to learn how to operate efficiently. Our present-day specialists are volunteers in an all-voluntary military. Many, if not most, expect to make a career out of it, and are willing to spend a good part of their lives to learn their trade. They don't want or need to be turned into anybody's political football. Not a single senior officer presently serving in the U.S. military thinks a return to the draft would be anything but a wasteful disaster.

Yes, if you begin drafting people into the armed forces again, you can probably train them to shoot a rifle, salute, march and drill, load an artillery piece, or swab the deck of a ship, just like in the old days. But the old days are gone. You won't get the dedication and special ability of the professionals we already have. What you will get instead is a gigantic, useless mob of half-trained malcontents whose skills are half-a-century outdated. The world already has too many militaries like that. ♦

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Democracy and Greatness

The education Americans need

By Harvey Mansfield

We sometimes hear of the place of the great books in a democratic education (not, unfortunately, at Harvard). When it is spoken of approvingly, that place is at the center or in the foundation of education or both. We also sometimes hear of the need for excellence in our education. For some reason we do not much hear of the need for excellent books or for greatness in our education. There is a difference between excellence and greatness, in that greatness is a specific kind of excellence.

I take excellence to be the sum of goodness. Since good things can be great or small, one can be excellent in small things such as personal grooming. Not in all small things: picking your nose with skillful delicacy does not qualify for excellence. Well, why not, since it is done well? The reason, I believe, is that this activity does not accord with human dignity. Greatness is the kind of excellence that has to do with human dignity, and when a certain excellence is against human dignity we are reluctant to call it good, let alone great.

To be dignified one must think well of oneself, one must respect oneself. To do this one must respect the best in oneself, and so in the first place, one must respect what is human as opposed to what is commonly animal. Men and pigs both eat, but men eat from tables at a decent distance from their food while pigs slurp from a trough (an observation by Glaucon in Plato's *Republic*). Human dignity, however, not only pertains to the common dignity of human beings but also has gradations that give some humans dignity over others. In the highest case dignity culminates in human greatness, which is always achieved by great human individuals. One could speak of the greatness of the American people, for example in carrying on the Cold War through many trials and bringing it to a successful conclusion despite the legendary impatience and inattention of democratic peoples. But this feat could not have been achieved without great or near-great individuals, the American presidents from Truman to Reagan—and particularly those two.

Greatness, as opposed to goodness, is associated with the individual, and not individuals abstractly but particular individuals with proper names. A collectivity can qualify for greatness, like the American people during the Cold War, if it is a particular collectivity. A species can be good, and there can be grades of goodness so that species can be ranked, raccoons above ants—though modern biology is uncomfortable with any notion of hierarchy. We nonscientific people dignify animals by making them pets, and giving them pet names. What does this show? It shows that we humans have dignity and also confer dignity. Our dignity is especially to confer dignity on ourselves, or better, to claim dignity. We confer dignity in response to a claim for it, sometimes a loud claim, sometimes unspoken. Nature cares for species, giving them the means to be fruitful and multiply, but nature does not care for individuals. Nature, or God, made us with freedom enough to claim our own dignity; we have to do it for ourselves. Greatness is not given to us, only the capacity for greatness. It is up to us to achieve greatness and then to remember it.

Greatness may be achieved in a day or in a moment, but its memory must be durable. Since greatness is individual, it has a particular time and place. It is always shown in a context—a culture, as we say, a regime, as Aristotle would say. But greatness has a splendor that enables it to rise above its context and to appeal to many generations of many peoples. In this way an instance of greatness, which is always contextual, for example Greek or American, becomes an instance of human greatness that all can recognize. To memorialize greatness is the work of poets and historians, writers who can make a convincing case for the attention of later generations. When it is done well, the writers produce great books, books that celebrate human greatness. Sometimes the writers make us wonder

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Harvey Mansfield is a professor of government at Harvard University and the author of Manliness. *This article is based on an address he delivered to the American Council of Trustees and Alumni earlier this fall.*

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whether they surpass their models: Who is greater, James Boswell, the great biographer, or Dr. Johnson, the model of greatness to which he always deferred? Great writers use their imagination to improve on fact, as did Thucydides when he invented speeches for the characters of his history. A great book such as *Don Quixote* can be entirely imaginary, or mostly imaginary. Perhaps the human imagination needs to begin from fact, building on what is visible, even if it is not confined to fact.

What of philosophy and its unconcern for individuals? The philosopher, said Socrates, is concerned with the what and not with the who. He wants to know what justice is, not who is just and therefore deserves to be remembered with praise. Yet Plato made Socrates, a great individual, the central figure in his dialogues and left a record of the important events in his life, as well as his speeches, and was content, almost like Boswell, to celebrate Socrates' greatness without claiming greatness for himself. In the *Phaedo*, Plato leaves it unclear whether he was present at Socrates' death.

What does this show us? It shows that philosophy studies the permanent problems of humanity, such as what is justice, but does so in a context where the philosopher challenges the official answer or answers to that question. The what is always in a context of the who, even though the what transcends the who. Thus the philosopher is in one aspect indifferent to human greatness, and in another, involved in it because of his own greatness. He cannot avoid the greatness of philosophy, which considers both nature, providing for the species and caring nothing for individuals, and human nature, yearning for greatness. In displaying Socrates in speech and in action, Plato conveys to us that greatness does not necessarily consist of heroic exploits full of stress and drama. A philosopher can be great; a woman can be great.

The foregoing is a preface to an argument for the use of great books in our education, based on the need for greatness in human life. Greatness is the culmination of individuality. Few of us are great, but all of us try to be great whenever we try to be individual. Trying to be individual is very different from the general concept of "individualism," as Tocqueville made clear. Individualism is the situation in modern democracies when individuals feel themselves to be incapable of acting on their own, incapable of being individuals. All are together in a mass, a huge quantity oppressive more by its number than by any wish to impose on others. Each impotent individual gives up on the effort to distinguish himself, retires into his family or circle of friends, and delivers his hopes or demands for society to government, an "immense being" that acts for the whole benignly—but not beneficently. The cure for individualism, Tocqueville shows, is partly to release the human impulse of intractability, the grouchy desire not to be governed by others. This negative sentiment is much in evidence in modern democracies, and it is mostly wholesome because it curtails ambitious schemes of patronizing control from big government. But being negative only protects you from others and does not justify your own claim for respect.

For positive self-assurance you need the picture of greatness for inspiration, if not emulation. "Self-esteem" is the byword of educational theory today. Self-esteem is fine if it is earned individually but harmful if it is awarded automatically because the recipient belongs to a class or category of the needy. True, we all need self-esteem but we do not need complacency or self-satisfaction. Mutual toleration is far from enough to fulfill our human dignity, for which we need something to admire. Indeed it is impossible for human beings to live without admiring other human beings. We all have already the picture of greatness willy-nilly, as we have our heroes from childhood. It needs to be nourished and coaxed into improvement rather than created from nothing.

Two obstacles to education in greatness loom before us, modern science and modern democracy. These two powerful forces are in alliance. Modern science is progressive and always on the advance; it doesn't like to look back. Today's scientific findings rob yesterday's of any significance other than antiquarian. Thus the greatness of past scientists like Galileo, Kepler, and Newton is diminished by their obsolescence. As human beings, scientists are of course not uninterested in who gets a Nobel prize, but this is apart from and at odds with their science, which is a collective enterprise that frowns on self-promoters if not heroes.

Social science, moreover, has difficulty in understanding human greatness. It looks for the cause of greatness in the circumstances of mass movements or trends that make greatness inevitable, hence not really great. It is based on a simplistic psychology of maximizing the power of one's preferences or of overcoming one's necessities. It is blind to the psychology of greatness because it cannot see actions that sacrifice self-interest to espouse a cause. It has no inkling of human spiritedness, the quality of soul discussed by Plato, called *thymos*, that prompts us to assert a principle by which to live—and for which to die—as opposed to surviving by any means possible.

Though social scientists would hate to admit it, social science is still a form of Social Darwinism which suffers from the attempt to explain the evolution of man by a principle, the principle of survival, that is manifestly untrue to the facts of human life, and above all to human greatness. Any education that wants to appreciate greatness would have to be critical of social science.

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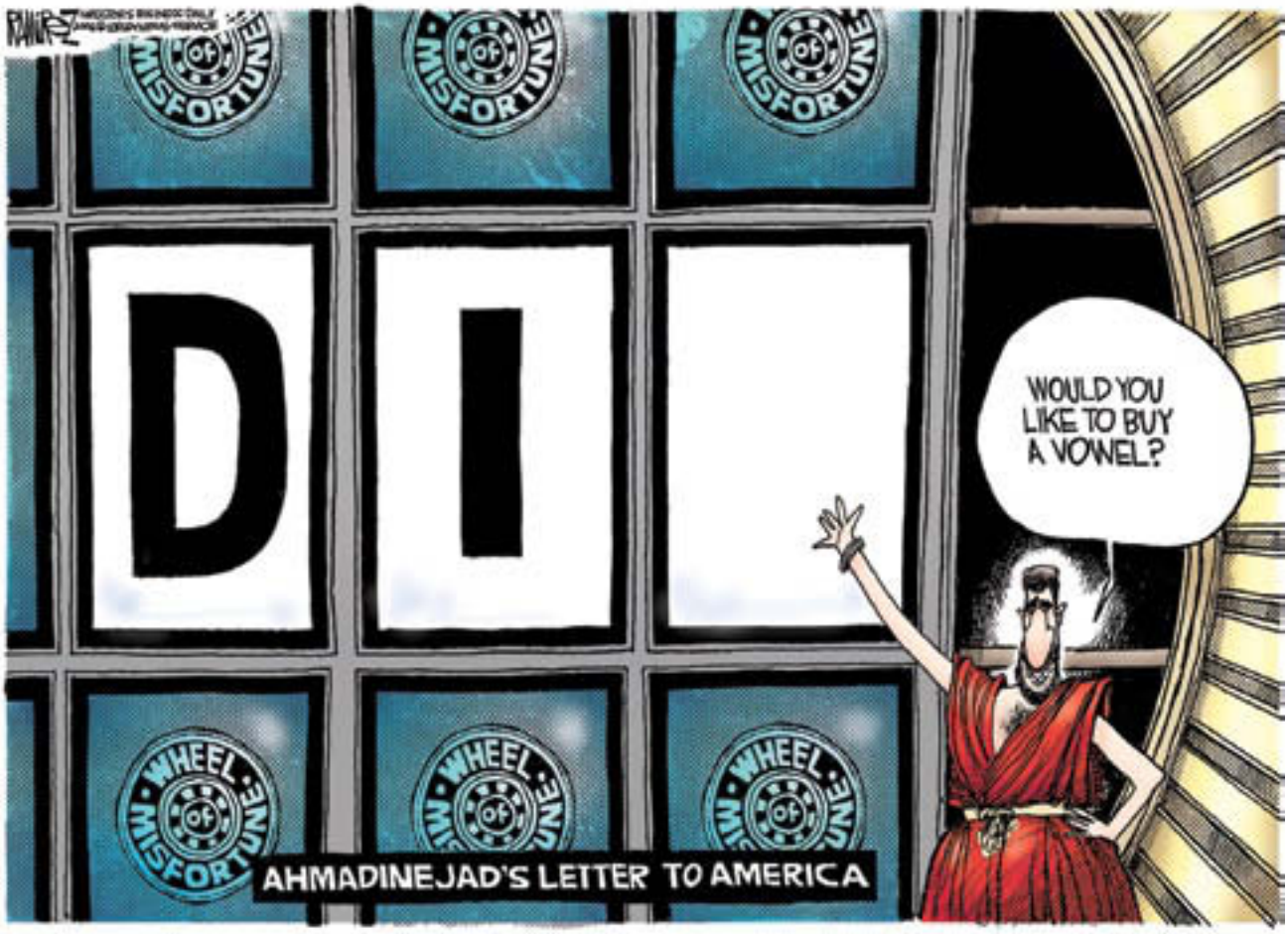
Modern democracy is envious of great men insofar as it is egalitarian. Even if great men have humble origins, they still belong to the few rather than the many. But to a surprising degree, by virtue of the now almost universal constitutional structure that incorporates executive power, modern democracy depends on one-person rule. American democracy especially welcomes great presidents when they appear and honors them after they die. To Americans, such presidents validate the wisdom of the Founders in endowing them with an office that permits them, calls them forth, to be great. Great presidents remind us Americans of the greatness of our Founders. Any American education in greatness could begin by appealing to the admiration most of us already have for those who initiated the society we now enjoy. I know, of course, that such an appeal is not as easy as it ought to be. It must overcome or bypass the denigration of the Founders by the social scientists, today's version of the democratic historians, enemies of greatness, that Tocqueville warned against.

When we think today of the perils of democratic self-esteem, the focus is on the claim for unearned praise endorsed by doting educationists. Behind the claim lies the democratic dogma, as Tocqueville calls it, that each person is sufficiently competent to run his own life. That dogma may contain more than a little vanity. But what of the opposite case of a great man who deserves more than the esteem he can get from a democracy? "Towering genius disdains a beaten path," said Lincoln in his Lyceum speech. The desire for distinction in a great man represents a threat to the established institutions of a democratic republic. Yet it is not likely that a democracy is going to express its gratitude to such a person for not overthrowing it—any more than a man will thank his guest for not raping his wife. Thus the great man in a democracy must show his modesty in noble condescension to his fellow citizens, as he must consider them. Lincoln did this, and so did George Washington, whose name Lincoln recommended to be revered "to the last."

It does no good to recommend reverence to an audience of college students, but you can perhaps show them good reason for reverence. You can be grateful for what great men have done for our country and at the same time take note, at least, of what they have refrained from doing. We democrats need to know that democracy has both a towering need and a limited appetite for greatness. ♦



Michael Ramirez

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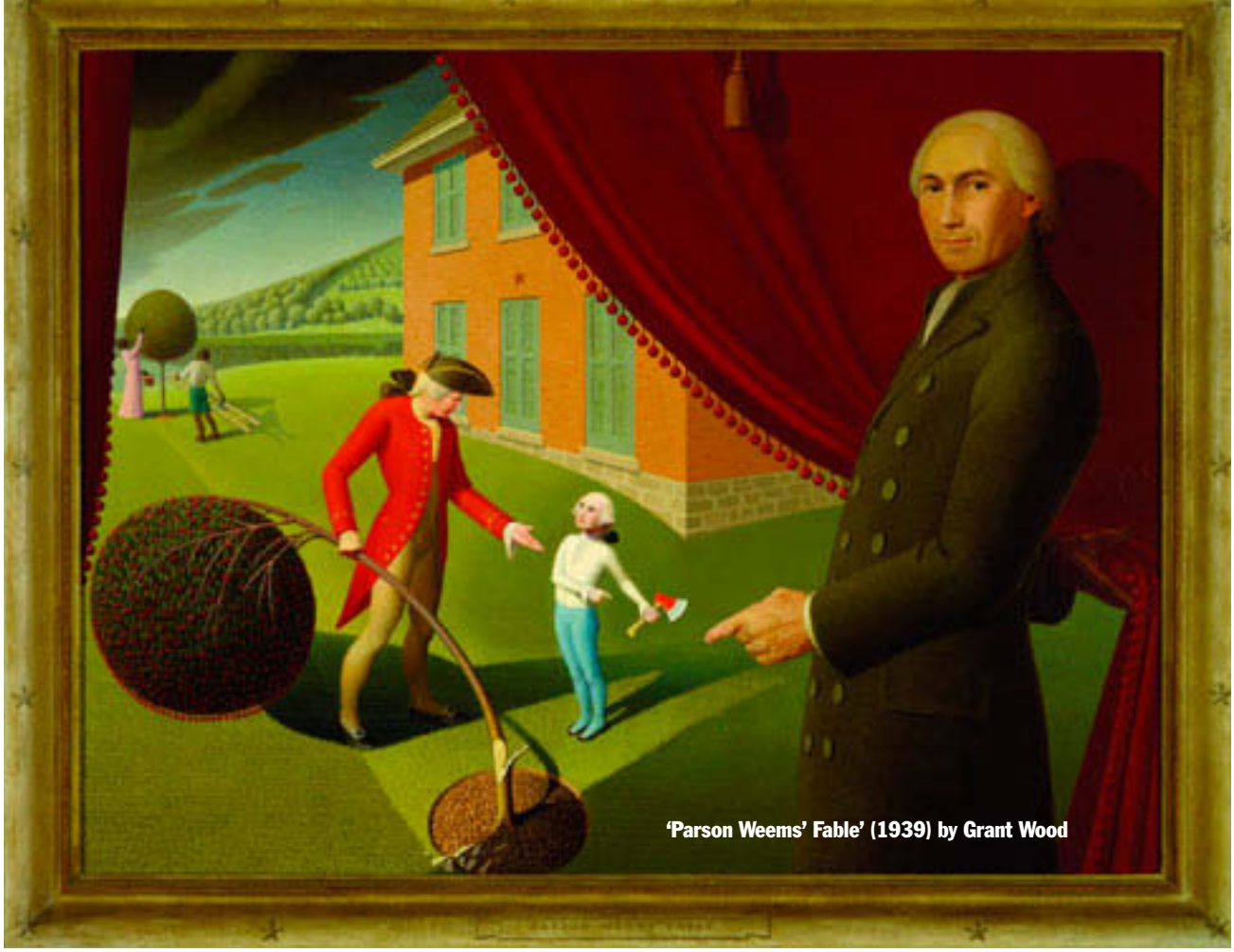

'Parson Weems' Fable' (1939) by Grant Wood

Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas. 1970.43

Gods of Our Fathers

The United States of Enlightenment BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Why should we care what the Founding Fathers believed, or did not believe, about religion? They went to such great trouble to insulate faith from politics, and took such care to keep their own convictions private, that it would scarcely matter if it could now be proved that, say, George Washington was a secret Baptist. The ancestor of the American Revolution was the English Revolution of the 1640s, whose leaders and spokesmen were certainly Protestant fundamentalists, but that did not bind the Framers and cannot be said to bind us, either. Indeed, the established Protestant church in Britain was one of the models which we can be quite sure the signatories of 1776 were determined to avoid emulating.

Moral Minority
Our Skeptical Founding Fathers
by Brooke Allen
Ivan R. Dee, 256 pp., $24.95

Moreover, the 18th-century scholars and gentlemen who gave us the U.S. Constitution were in a relative state of innocence respecting knowledge of the cosmos, the earth, and the psyche, of the sort that has revolutionized the modern argument over faith. Charles Darwin was born in Thomas Jefferson's lifetime (on the very same day as Abraham Lincoln, as it happens), but Jefferson's guesses about the fossils found in Virginia were to Darwinism what alchemy is to chemistry. And the insights of Einstein and Freud lay over a still more distant horizon. The furthest that most skeptics could go was in the direction of an indeterminate

Christopher Hitchens, a columnist for Vanity Fair, *is the author, most recently, of* Thomas Jefferson: Author of America. *His study of Thomas Paine's* The Rights of Man *will be published in 2007.*

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deism, which accepted that the natural order seemed to require a designer but did not necessitate the belief that the said designer actually intervened in human affairs. Invocations such as "nature's god" were partly intended to hedge this bet, while avoiding giving offense to the pious. Even Thomas Paine, the most explicitly anti-Christian of the lot, wrote *The Age of Reason* as a defense of god from those who traduced him in man-made screeds like the Bible.

Considering these limitations, it is quite astonishing how irreligious the Founders actually were. You might not easily guess, for example, who was the author of the following words:

> Oh! Lord! Do you think that a Protestant Popedom is annihilated in America? Do you recollect, or have you ever attended to the ecclesiastical Strifes in Maryland Pensilvania [sic], New York, and every part of New England? What a mercy it is that these People cannot whip and crop, and pillory and roast, as yet in the U.S.! If they could they would. . . . There is a germ of religion in human nature so strong that whenever an order of men can persuade the people by flattery or terror that they have salvation at their disposal, there can be no end to fraud, violence, or usurpation.

That was John Adams, in relatively mild form. He was also to point out, though without too much optimism, the secret weapon that secularists had at their disposal—namely the profusion of different religious factions.

> The multitude and diversity of them, You will say, is our Security against them all. God grant it. But if We consider that the Presbyterians and Methodists are far the most numerous and the most likely to unite; let a George Whitefield arise, with a military cast, like Mahomet, or Loyola, and what will become of all the other Sects who can never unite?

George Whitefield was the charismatic preacher who is so superbly mocked in Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*. Of Franklin it seems almost certainly right to say that he was an atheist (Jerry Weinberger's excellent recent study *Benjamin Franklin Unmasked* being the best reference here), but the master tacticians of church-state separation, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, were somewhat more opaque about their beliefs. In passing the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom—the basis of the later First Amendment—they brilliantly exploited the fear that each Christian sect had of persecution by the others. It was easier to get the squabbling factions to agree on no tithes than it would have been to get them to agree on tithes that might also benefit their doctrinal rivals. In his famous "wall of separation" letter, assuring the Baptists of Danbury, Connecticut, of their freedom from persecution, Jefferson was responding to the expressed fear of this little community that they would be oppressed by—the Congregationalists of Connecticut.

This same divide-and-rule tactic may have won him the election of 1800 that made him president in the first place. In the face of a hysterical Federalist campaign to blacken Jefferson as an infidel, the Voltaire of Monticello appealed directly to those who feared the arrogance of the Presbyterians. Adams himself thought that this had done the trick.

"With the Baptists, Quakers, Methodists, and Moravians," he wrote, "as well as the Dutch and German Lutherans and Calvinists, it had an immense effect, and turned them in such numbers as decided the election. They said, let us have an Atheist or Deist or any thing rather than an establishment of Presbyterianism."

The essential point—that a religiously neutral state is the chief guarantee of religious pluralism—is the one that some of today's would-be theocrats are determined to miss. Brooke Allen misses no chance to rub it in, sometimes rather heavily stressing contemporary "faith-based" analogies. She is especially interesting on the extent to which the Founders felt obliged to keep their doubts on religion to themselves. Madison, for example, did not find himself able, during the War of 1812, to refuse demands for a national day of prayer and fasting. But he confided his own reservations to his private papers, published as "Detached Memoranda" only in 1946. It was in those pages, too, that he expressed the view that to have chaplains opening Congress, or chaplains in the armed forces, was unconstitutional.

Of all these pen-portraits of religious reservation, the one most surprising to most readers will probably be that of George Washington. While he was president, he attended the Reverend James Abercrombie's church, but on "sacramental Sundays" left the congregation immediately before the taking of communion. When reproached for this by the good Reverend, he acknowledged the reproof—and ceased attending church at all on those Sundays which featured "the Lord's supper." To do otherwise, as he put it, would be "an ostentatious display of religious zeal arising altogether from his elevated station."

Jefferson was content to take part in public religious observances and to reserve his scorn and contempt for Christianity for his intimate correspondents, but our first president would not give an inch to hypocrisy. In that respect, if in no other, the shady, ingratiating Parson Weems had him right.

In his 1784 book, *Reason: The Only Oracle of Man*, Ethan Allen wrote: "The doctrine of the *Incarnation* itself, and the *Virgin mother*, does not merit a serious confutation and therefore is passed in silence, except the mere mention of it." John Adams was prepared to be a little more engaged with theological subjects, in which he possessed a huge expertise, but he also reposed his real faith in the bedrock of reason. Human understanding, he wrote (seemingly following David Hume), is its own revelation, and:

> [h]as made it certain that two and one make three; and that one is not three; nor can three be one. . . . Miracles or Prophecies might frighten us out of our Witts; might scare us to death; might induce Us to lie; to say that We believe that 2 and 2 make 5. But we should not believe it. We should know the contrary.

From David Hume via ridicule of

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the Trinity to a prefiguration of Winston Smith! The connection between religious skepticism and political liberty may not be as absolute as that last allusion implies, but there is no doubt that some such connection existed very vividly in the minds of those "men of the Enlightenment" who adorned Philadelphia and Boston and New York and Washington as the 18th century evolved into the 19th.

In a first-class closing chapter on the intellectual and scientific world that shaped the Framers, Allen discusses the wide influence then exerted by great humanist thinkers like Hume, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Locke, and Voltaire. It became a point of principle as well as of practice to maintain that liberty of conscience and the freedom of the individual were quite incompatible with any compulsion in religion, just as they would be incompatible with any repression of belief. (This is precisely why the French revolution, which seemed to negate the promise of Enlightenment, was to become such a painful cause of disagreement, and worse, between Federalists and Republicans.)

In 1821 Thomas Jefferson wrote of his hope "that the human mind will some day get back to the freedom it enjoyed 2000 years ago. This country, which has given the world an example of physical liberty, owes to it that of moral emancipation also." I think that Allen is not wrong in comparing this to the finest passages in Edward Gibbon. She causes us to catch our breath at the thought that, at the birth of the United States, there were men determined to connect it to a philosophical wisdom that pre-dated the triumph of monotheism. It is the only reason for entertaining the belief that America was ever blessed by "Providence"—as Roger a named his open-minded settlement in Rhode Island, a refuge from the tyranny of Pilgrims and Puritans.

In a time when the chief declared enemy of the American experiment is theocratic fanaticism, we should stand together and demand, "Mr Jefferson: Build Up That Wall!" ♦

Your Hit Parade

Since 2300 B.C., the music's gone round and round.

BY JOHN SIMON

A Concise History of Western Music
by Paul Griffiths
Cambridge, 358 pp., $35

Music is an abstract art, however much some musicians resist its being called that. Almost all other arts have something to do with natural or man-made forms, or with words, most of which everyone (at least until recently) would know. To be sure, we have abstract painting and sculpture, but there is something concrete and substantial about them, making them more accessible, palpable. Music, though, exists in time rather than space, and before you know it, it vanishes into thin air.

A play or movie also vanishes, but it is there—on tape or DVD—for you to recapture and analyze. Music, however, will not stand still. No matter how often you play it on disc, you do not, as a non-music-reading layman, understand its structure and components. Or do "pedal point," "Lydian mode," or "*cantus firmus*" mean much to you? Something about music remains elusive to all but the expert.

Abstract, then. So, to make its effect, it has to be either simple enough for the common man to get it on first hearing (he is not likely to return and study it), or subtle and profound enough for the uncommon man. It need not polarize the audience, but only at its best will it appeal to the best audiences. And to do this for longer than a mere lifetime, it had better be classical music.

It is so that this generally useful book concerns itself (save for some asides) with the classical music of Europe and North America, in both of which Griffiths has been active as a critic. But already I wonder: Why not include Latin America? Is it less western than North America? Are Hector Villa-Lobos, Camargo Guarnieri, Alberto Ginastera, Silvestre Revueltas, and their likes eastern, as they would have seemed to Columbus, or merely small potatoes for Griffiths?

Granted, a history of music from prehistory to today, which may be post-history, in 358 or so pages may be a bit too concise—downright laconic. Certainly much that is included gets short shrift, and much that you would want included isn't there at all. But you do get a smorgasbord, most of whose items are worth sampling, with only a few likely to cause indigestion.

Griffiths does some good things. First, he realizes that music has much to do with using, ordering, interpreting time. The insufficiently known, short-lived German Pre-Romantic Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder wrote in the 1790s, "Music is to me wholly an image of life—that springs from nothing and subsides into nothing." Whether or not Griffiths read this, he is on to something related in several statements: "Any musical performance—any musical listening—is a heroic exercise against time's depredations." In other words, an ordering and bestowing of life in the teeth of transience. And he considers music, in part, an antidote to mortality.

Next, he tries to demystify music as much as possible for the lay reader. He provides brief definitions of such things as fugue or motet, translations of Italian or Latin terms such as *da capo* and *con-*

John Simon writes about theater for Bloomberg News.

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ductus. When a work has a foreign or esoteric title, he usually translates or explains it. But he is rather erratic about it: He discusses Barraque's . . . *au-delà du hazard* or Xenakis's *Jonchaies* without a helpful translation. Conversely, he offers English translations of others—Ligeti's *Poème symphonique* and Scriabin's *Le Poème de l'extase*—which even a grade-schooler would consider supererogatory. (As, incidentally, is that "*Le*," which Scriabin himself never perpetrated.)

Further, Griffiths usefully cites the historic, social, and cultural circumstances that may, consciously or not, have influenced a piece of music, which can be better apprehended and appreciated in such a context. Often he will also suggestively invoke parallel aspects in the other arts, or even the sciences, adding cultural to musical interest.

He likes, too, to point out any sort of relationship between the music of different eras, providing an intellectually satisfying sense of continuum. For example, in discussing the medieval composer Guillaume de Machaut, he observes: "As his music became known, so it began influencing the composers of six centuries on, including Stravinsky (in his own mass), Olivier Messiaen and Jean Barraqué. Some others, notably Harrison Birtwistle and György Kurtag, were making arrangements of pieces by him."

Finally, Griffiths is not afraid to stick his neck out in offering subjective interpretations as having universal value. So, for instance, he volunteers about the above-mentioned Scriabin work that it combines static harmonies "with urgent propulsions that come from a trumpet melody, resulting in a series of waves that mount with unabashed sexual connotations." All right, waves; but whom do they mount with unabashed sexual connotations? Could this have something to do with Griffiths's knowledge (unmentioned in the book) that Scriabin abandoned his spouse and mother of his children to take on, as common-law wife, a young admirer, with whom he begat several more children? But whether this made the music erotic, let alone unabashedly so, remains open to question.

Or consider the following three passages. It seems that "in the first movement of [Mahler's] unfinished Tenth [symphony] alarm—alarm conveyed by the music about itself as well as about the world or the persona whose feelings are being expressed—sounds out in a chord of violent dissonance." Alarm about the world, if you like, but why and how about itself? And who is this persona whose feelings are being expressed? Could it be Alma, the tempestuous Mrs. M?

Similarly, we read that Chopin's "gestures could be as terrifying as anything in Berlioz, as at the close of the G minor Ballade." I promptly put on the formidable Maurizio Pollini's performance of that piece, expecting him to do his terrifying worst, but nary a tremor did it elicit from me.

Even more mysterious is Griffiths's exegesis of Charles Ives's *Unanswered Question*: "A sound drama for instrumentalists in three different positions, such multi-locality being another of his innovations. A solo trumpet keeps placing the barely tonal question, to which woodwinds respond with atonal scurryings that suggest evasions, while strings, like seers, guard their own answer in slow descents of dense concords." Here I worry especially about strings like seers—why? And what seers would guard their answer? Surely seers relish trumpeting their prophecies, whether by solo trumpet or any other means of foisting them on us.

To give him the benefit of the doubt, Griffiths may have ruthlessly compressed his text in the interest of concision, sometimes to the point of opacity; or, more often, by squeezing it into supposedly suggestive, poeticizing tropes that seem *de trop*.

A more serious problem for me is his excessive catholicity. Granted that, in the capacity of historian, Griffiths must rein in critical predilections and antipathies, and try to be objective and impersonal. This, we might assume, justifies the following: "In his *4'33"* [John Cage] asked his closest musical associate, David Tudor, to sit at the keyboard for that length of time and play nothing. The piece was of course provocative, an indication of Cage's closeness not only to east Asian (especially zen) ideals of non-intention but also to the 'anti-art' of Europe in the 1920s. But it was also an invitation to listen to whatever sounds were being produced in the room or outside. Music was liberated from composers, performers, instruments and occasions. It was everywhere."

Cage, whose importance is luckily diminishing, though not nearly fast enough, was esteemed by many in his day. That Griffiths is paying this kind of attention to such nonsense attests to more than a historian's duty. Clearly, *4'33"* belongs at the utmost to the history of Dada, or of the great hoaxes; with music it has precious little to do.

Griffiths pays far too much attention to unlistenable composers such as Cage, Kagel, Stockhausen, Ferneyhough, Barraqué (about whom he has written a book), Babbitt, Birtwistle, and sundry others of that ilk, to make it pass for mere duty. There are a great many composers that Griffiths could have treated as summarily as he does Horatiu Radulescu: "A Romanian who moved to Paris in 1969 and became something of a wild card in French music, worked with grand pianos that he had retuned to pure frequency ratios and turned on their sides so that their strings could be bowed; he also used whole orchestras of flutes, or other instruments, to create new timbres."

I guess that if "Timber!" can be a warning cry, so can "Timbre!"

To my mind, Griffiths sails most smoothly with music up to and including the classical period; starting with Liszt, he begins to list rather too heavily. With the later 19th century he becomes barely seaworthy. He now places what he considers experimentation and innovation way above intrinsic worth. Thus, for instance, the wonderful Gabriel Fauré gets only one paragraph, and even that he must share with Debussy, who, quite rightly, gets plenty of space of his own.

In the 20th century, as perceived by Griffiths, things get really skewed. The extremely important Henri Dutilleux

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Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony, 1949

rates one sentence; no mention at all of Luigi Dallapiccola, Frank Martin, Frank Bridge, Alexander Tcherepnin, and many other fine composers. But pages and pages enshrine the likes of Nono, Stockhausen, Ferneyhough, Barraqué, and other fingernails-on-blackboard moderns. Should Pierre Boulez (better than some, to be sure) appear on 18 pages, Manuel de Falla on only two? The great Benjamin Britten, a brilliant fellow Englishman, gets far less than his due, and even that, I suspect, more as Brit than as Britten.

There is almost as much on the futurist Luigi Russolo, a mere curiosity, and more of a painter than composer, "but lack of musical grounding was not a problem, for what he demanded—in *The Art of Noises*, one of the manifestos typical of this group—was a wholly new art in tune with the modern world: 'The machine today has created so many varieties and combinations of noise that pure musical sound—with its poverty and monotony—no longer awakens any emotion in the hearer.'"

True, Griffiths is somewhat patronizing here, but I cannot escape the feeling that he, too, is more "in tune with the modern world" than with the tunefulness of certain modern composers who are not atonalists, dodecaphonists, or concocters of electronic music or even ghastly *musique concrète*, which is close to what Russolo advocated.

Going back in time, Griffiths has his uses. I was pleased to learn such non-Western data as that the earliest known composer, *circa* 2300 B.C. at Ur, was Enheduanna, high priestess of the moon. Also that the earliest known notated music, from *circa* 1400 B.C., is a hymn to the moon goddess. Could it sound any worse than the stuff of Brian Ferneyhough, extolled on six of Griffiths's pages, whose music, to my ears, is so much moonshine?

But, I repeat, we do learn things from Griffiths. For example, that the Holy Ghost was said to have sung into Pope Gregory the Great's ear the once and again so popular music known as Gregorian chant. Or that Rameau's music became "so popular that the Paris Opera was instructed by the government to limit productions of his works to two per season." No such enlightened governments nowadays, alas.

In his very second paragraph, Griffiths fascinatingly tells us that flute music almost certainly began somewhere between 40,000 and 50,000 B.C., as we deduce from "fragments of hollow bone with otherwise inexplicable holes." He is equally fascinating—after quite a few less valuable paragraphs—in his penultimate one, where we read: "Given that most people in western societies have access, through computers, to sound samples (including music of so many kinds), and to routines for synthesizing and transforming sounds, composition may soon become as widespread as the writing of poetry."

Horrors!

The book ends with a helpful, though incomplete, glossary of musical terms, and a list for "Further reading and listening." The recommended books seem worthwhile—I have certainly profited from a few of those that I own, notably Faubion Bowers's on Scriabin, Roger Nichols's on Debussy, Michael Kennedy's on Strauss, and Laurel E. Fay's on Shostakovich.

But with Griffiths's CD choices I have problems. Many of them are sins of omission, but there are also some of commission. One example: If you are going to recommend as your sole specimen of the important German *lied* Schubert's *Winterreise*, well enough, perhaps; but sung by whom? Matthias Goerne?

Now Goerne is a very fine baritone, especially if you like his lean, modern approach. Yet surely the mandatory choice would have been Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. What he has done for the *lied*—magisterially performing it, cogently writing about it, and hugely popularizing it—deserves a place in a history of western music, no matter how concise. ♦

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Brainstorm

How psychoanalysis came to America.

BY EDWIN M. YODER JR.

CORBIS

Sigmund Freud, fourth from right, at Clark University, 1909

However strenuously one might resist the metaphor, classic Freudianism bears the unmistakable marks of a religious faith—founder and pope, apostles and schismatics and heretics, and, not least, a special *keregma* or proclamation: the sexual origin of all neurosis. And while he scorned even the idea of religion, Freud himself believed that his psychoanalytic movement might wither, or become a parochial Jewish sect, unless it recruited missionaries to *partes infidelium*: chiefly America, where, presumably, there were neurotics in abundance with plenty of money to pay for treatment.

Putnam Camp
Sigmund Freud, James Jackson Putnam, and the Purpose of American Psychology
by George Prochnik
Other Press, 480 pp. $29.95

This volume tells the story of the recruitment of one key missionary, the eminent Boston neurologist James Jackson Putnam, Harvard Medical School's first professor of diseases of the nervous system and, incidentally, the great-grandfather of the author. George Prochnik's credentials as the chronicler of this old world/new world alliance include a dual ancestry. His father's family fled Vienna after the Nazi *Anschluss* in 1938. His mother, James J. Putnam's granddaughter, came of that *echt*-New England strain, so that in Prochnik we have an emblematic juncture of the two cultures united, not without tensions, in the Freud-Putnam collaboration.

James J. Putnam, rather late in a distinguished career, became Freud's leading exponent in America following Freud's visit in the summer of 1909. Stanley Hall, president of Clark University, invited Freud, along with a host of other world-class savants—"men with bulging brains," observed the local newspaper—for an anniversary celebration. Putnam, having just removed his favorite daughter's inflamed appendix in an emergency kitchen-table operation, hastened to Worcester for the Freudian revelation that would radically alter his life and practice.

Putnam Camp, from which the title is drawn, was a rustic family retreat in the Adirondack wilderness where Freud, with his companions Carl G. Jung and Sandor Ferenczi, spent a long weekend at Putnam's invitation in June 1909, immediately following the Clark jamboree. It was Freud's maiden exposure to the exotic recreational rituals of Yankeedom, a sort of miniature coed Bohemian Grove where country cooking, long hikes and steep climbs, silly songs and sillier versifying, bonfires and skits, handicrafts, and Serious Talk were the order of the day. In their discussions at the camp, Putnam and Freud sealed a friendship that would have enduring echoes in American psychology.

As one might expect, the mixture produced volatile cultural and ideological frictions that wore upon, without fatally damaging, the collaboration. Freudianism was suspected in Putnam's professional circles of an unwholesome obsession with sex; and when the new convert read a paper at one neurological conference, a colleague accused him of telling "pornographic stories about pure virgins." The "pornography" suspicion has dogged psychoanalysis from the start, and was even shared, it seems, by both Mrs. Putnam and Mrs. Freud.

In any case, Freud welcomed Putnam warmly into the psychoanalytic *verein*, and invited him to keynote its Weimar conference in 1911. Even so, Putnam, a decade Freud's senior, remained his own man. Until his death in the Armistice year, he sought to blend a Freudian clinical practice with some enlargement of personal vision. Far more than Freud's, his emphasis was on some sort of sublimation, the conversion of libido to "higher" uses.

He viewed the need as elementary. Psychoanalysis might bring a patient to grasp the buried sources of his neurosis, but what followed? Did the therapeutic task end there, with personal insight? Or might the therapist—

Edwin M. Yoder Jr. is a former editor and columnist in Washington. His novel, Lions at Lamb House, *about Freud and Henry James, will be published next year.*

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Freud, again, drastically resisted the transformation of psychoanalysis into mere therapy—encourage his client to imagine an ideal self-transcendence? Putnam's interest in transcendence was reinforced by his Emersonian heritage (the Concord sage and his son were Putnam family friends) and, even more so, by his patient Susan Blow, an eminent Hegelian philosopher and educator, the "mother of the American kindergarten movement," and also a depressive. In her long, intimate dialogue with Freud's chosen American, Blow advocated an idealism infused with Hegelian dialectic leading to some "higher" synthesis. The precise content of that synthesis might be undefined; but in Blow's view, psychoanalysis could only be the threshold of a larger vision.

This, of course, spelled trouble. Freud fiercely denied that psychoanalysis could or should promote a "world-view," least of all a religious one. When what he viewed as a "black tide" of obscurantism and mysticism cropped up in Jung's thought, he forced Jung to withdraw from the psychoanalytic movement. Yet Freud was inclined to humor Putnam's visionary quirks, up to a point. While he adopted Freud's system, Putnam lobbied delicately for Freud's endorsement of a metaphysical goal. Freud's letters transmitted signals of amiable appeasement of the high-minded Bostonian, but what the founder was saying privately to Ferenczi about Putnam's spiritual hobby horse suggests a certain disingenuousness.

Clinically, Putnam was soon weaned from the quackish, physiologically oriented neurological "cures" popular at the turn of the century, the era when "neurasthenia" was treated by hydrotherapy to restore mental energy, and when the Rev. Sylvester Graham invented his eponymous cracker as, in part, a deterrent to masturbation. Putnam assuredly found that psychoanalysis, the talking cure, produced better results, and was startled to find that he had hardly known what went on in the heads of patients he had been treating for years. Meanwhile, he continued his personal analysis with Freud, tendering intimate disclosures by mail about his marital life that must have seemed awkward to a dignified New Englander in his seventh decade.

Putnam Camp is, then, a revealing chronicle of cross-cultural polarities: Boston and Vienna, Jew and Gentile, American and European, sexuality and transcendence. It is also a story of the mechanics of intellectual transmission and, with the exception of an occasional runaway sentence, well told.

The American psychoanalytic movement established by James Jackson Putnam flourished in its fashion. "Don't they know we are bringing the plague?" Freud had asked his companions Jung and Ferenczi as their ship sailed into New York Harbor that epochal day in 1909. The gist of that gnomic (and presumably lighthearted) question remains elusive, but it was perhaps an instance in which a joke in proper Freudian fashion veiled unconscious complexities.

Whatever it was, the bacillus certainly had a future. ♦

Modern Romance

The world according to Heaney and Strand.

BY WYATT PRUNTY

Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney and U.S. poet laureate Mark Strand were schooled to be moderns, but they became Romantics.

If, following World War I, modernism began with disillusionment and increased doubt about human reason and history, poets following World War II have had even more reason to doubt: a succession of wars, the Holocaust, the nuclear destruction of civilian targets, and worldwide terrorism. If anything, doubt has compounded. In Seamus Heaney's case, however, doubt does not extend to individual lives.

District and Circle
by Seamus Heaney
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 96 pp., $20

Man and Camel
by Mark Strand
Knopf, 72 pp., $24

In his latest collection, Heaney is clearly different from that other Irish Nobel laureate (early Romantic and later modernist) W.B. Yeats. For one thing, Heaney's poetry is more local than that of Yeats, and its first care is given to people—Mick Joyce, George Seferis, Barney Devlin, Robert Donnelly, Tommy Evans, Phil McKeever, Harry Boyle, Barrie Cooke, Niall Fitzduff, et al.

The poems containing these names are very different from Yeats's elegy "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," for example. Yeats celebrates a young aristocrat of whom he asks, "What made us dream that he could comb grey hair?" A silly question written in the service of rhetoric and self-association. In contrast, Seamus Heaney's "A Clip" is about cutting rather than combing one's hair, and celebrates a less privileged world that is Catholic rather than Protestant, a world recalled by "Harry Boyle's one-room, one-chimney house" where, in his youth, Heaney went for "a clip." Heaney's imagination is not captured by social power nor astonished by death the way Yeats's was; instead, Heaney's imagination gravitates to the give-and-take of ordinary existence. Here is the conclusion to "A Clip":

What was it happened there?
Weeds shoulder-high up to the open door,
Harry not shaved, close breathing in

Wyatt Prunty is Carlton Professor of English at the University of the South (Sewanee).

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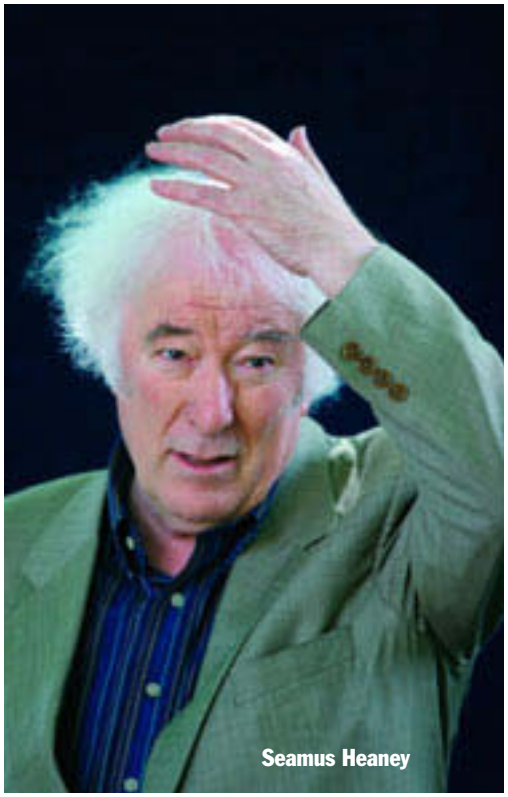
CORBIS / Colin McPherson

Seamus Heaney

your ear,
Loose hair in windfalls blown across the floor
Under the collie's nose. The collie's stare.

Compared with Yeats's aristocrat, Heaney's barber seems modest, but the world of "A Clip" is populated in a way the rhetoric of "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" precludes.

Yeats said of himself that he was the last Romantic, but of the two it is easier to imagine Heaney's inclusion in Coleridge and Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*. Yeats's celebration of aristocratic Ireland runs opposite to Coleridge and Wordsworth's interest in the language of common people. Meanwhile, Heaney genuinely is interested in common people, and his diction matches Coleridge and Wordsworth's ideal of the "real language of men in a state of vivid sensation."

It is inviting to compare Heaney's common usage and his focus on landscape and the individual to that of Wordsworth in "We Are Seven," "Resolution and Independence," or these lines from "The Old Cumberland Beggar": *Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness / Gives the last human interest to his heart*. Or to stay with this comparison a moment longer, the "*nameless, unremembered, acts / Of kindness*" that Wordsworth summarizes from a distance in "Tintern Abbey" are encountered up close in the characters one meets poem after poem in *District and Circle*.

The protean Mark Strand makes his way around the modernist legacy differently. For one thing, Romantic though he is, he nevertheless retains a modernist irony that is atypical of romanticism. Strand also carries with him the modern sense of time that caused Eliot to write, "I have lost my passion," or for Eliot to find "fear in a handful of dust," or, still only in his thirties, pompously to ask, "Why should the aged eagle stretch his wings?"

Strand, however, objectifies the effects of time with a level of play absent in Eliot's high seriousness. There are distinct differences in tone here. Eliot's "Prufrock," "The Waste Land," and "Four Quartets" reveal the same elevated angst about mortality and immortality that the Victorian Tennyson displays over the course of "In Memoriam" and in "Ulysses." In contrast, Strand can sound fey, and this is part of his independence from a modernism that, for all its claims of innovation, never escaped Victorian earnestness. Strand's poem "2002," in *Man and Camel*, begins,

I am not thinking of Death, but Death is thinking of me.
He leans back in his chair, rubs his hands, strokes
his beard, and says, "I'm thinking of Strand, I'm thinking
that one of these days I'll be out back, swinging my scythe
or holding my hourglass up to the moon, and Strand will appear
in a jacket and tie, and together under the boulevards'
leafless trees we'll stroll into the city of souls."

Seven pages later, in "2032," Death reappears:

It is evening in the town of X
where Death, who used to love me, sits
in a limo with a blanket spread across his thighs,
waiting for his driver to appear. His hair
is white, his eyes have gotten small, his cheeks
have lost their luster. He has not swung his scythe
in years, or touched his hourglass.

An intervening 30-year span has resulted in Death's decrepitude. What is the serious point of the humor here? It is the refusal to live in fear of "a handful of dust," in fear of not living, something the time-haunted moderns never managed. Strand's position is much like that of Wordsworth's "Leech-Gatherer," of "Resolution and Independence," except Strand's humor applies torsion to Wordsworth's "fear that kills," converting it not to prayer (as found at the end of "Resolution and Independence") but to wry acceptance.

Heaney is a realist who celebrates particular lives and events, while Strand is a fabulist who tests more general conditions—time, order, reason, mortality. Heaney occupies himself with patterns evidenced in local circumstance, while Strand questions our overall sense of pattern.

Heaney's "The Aerodrome" ends:

If self is a location, so is love:
Bearings taken, markings, cardinal points,
Options, obstinacies, dug heels, and distance,
Here and there and now and then, a stance.

In contrast, Strand's "Elevator" tests one's "stance" against the absurdities of repetitive pattern:

1
The elevator went to the basement. The door opened.
A man stepped in and asked if I was going up.
"I'm going down," I said. "I won't be going up."
2
The elevator went to the basement. The doors opened.
A man stepped in and asked if I was going up.
"I'm going down," I said. "I won't be going up."

In his collection of lectures, *The Redress of Poetry*, Heaney says poetry is a "condition of illuminated rightness" that counterweights what is unjust with

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"the virtue of hope." By it we move from "delight to wisdom." These ideas are consistent with a literary history extending back to Sidney and Horace, a history that Heaney has made his own with a relaxed ease that the modernists Pound and Eliot, who touted the contemporaneous past, seem to have been too earnest to have enjoyed very much. And though Heaney differs considerably from his fellow countryman Yeats, the latter, too, is an important part of the past for Heaney, as is George Herbert.

Heaney praises Yeats for "beating on the wall of the physical world in order to provoke an answer from the other side," and Herbert he celebrates for "his *via media*." These virtues are essential to Heaney: pressing the visible world for its invisible counterpart but doing so with the centering influences of faith, history, and reason.

As Heaney puts it, "The vision of reality which poetry offers should be transformative." In his view, Yeats and Herbert succeed at this. And they are not alone. Heaney's poem "Wordsworth's Skates" ends describing a transformative Wordsworth "*As he flashed from the clutch of earth along its curve / And left it scored*." For his own part, Heaney's poem "Sugan" opens, "*The fluster of that soft supply and feed—*" and concludes, "*a power to bind and loose / Eked out and into each last tug and lap*." Sugan is a hand-twisted rope. Heaney is describing the work and the world of common people. The work here is by hand, and it is physically transformative; heather or straw twisted by hand into rope.

In "Out of This World," a poem about religious faith, Heaney tells us that "*The loss occurred off stage. And yet I cannot / disavow words like 'thanksgiving' or 'host.'*" These words "*have an undying / tremor and draw, like well water far down.*" Such poems as "In Iowa" and "On the Spot" continue the tension between "loss" and "draw," but resolving these there is the powerful example of two domestic workers, Sarah and Mary, whose lives are celebrated in "Home Help." And in "Home Fires" there is another instance of transformation found in the metaphorical results of tending a "cast-iron stove," part of a section dedicated to his fellow line-laborer W.H. Auden:

So one more time
I tote it, hell-mouth stopper, flat-earth disc,
And replace it safely. Wherefore rake and rattle,
Watch sparks die in the ashpan, poke again,
Think of dark matter in the starlit coal-house.

In his collection of essays, *The Weather of Words*, Mark Strand observes that "for Wordsworth the self precedes experience," whereas "for the contemporary poet, experience must precede a sense of self." Strand has the late moderns John Berryman and Robert Lowell in mind, who represent "opposite modes of autobiographical poetry" from the "subjective-visionary mode of Wordsworth." These "confessional" poets, Strand argues, are "revealed journalistically, not imaginatively." Strand joins Heaney in a shared interest in Wordsworth that is part of each poet's move away from the tenets of modernism.

The final poem in Strand's collection is a response to Christ's seven last words. The concluding section of "Poem After the Seven Last Words" begins,

Back down these stairs to the same scene,
to the moon, the stars, the night wind. Hours pass
and only the harp off in the distance and the wind
moving through it

We are once again amid mysteries of faith heard in the Romantics' aeolian harp, what earlier in the poem Strand has called "*a formal nakedness . . . the truth / of disguise and the mask of belief . . . joined forever*." What he celebrates is neither entirely a believer's nor a skeptic's view but elements of both, a "*sea of endless transparence, of utmost / calm, a place of constant beginning that has within it / . . . what has not arisen in the human heart*."

As Heaney can be, Strand is in dialogue with a sublime of Wordsworthian complexity, though a sublime found more readily in history than nature. The modernists touted the tradition and railed against Romanticism. Heaney and Strand are Romantics, and in that seem quite traditional. ♦

An Apprenticeship

Chronicling Commentary*'s early years.*

BY BENJAMIN BALINT

The story of *Commentary*, one of the most influential opinion magazines in American history, is fascinating in itself. After its surprising turn from early anti-Communist liberalism (1945-60) to a turbulent decade of New Left radicalism (1960s), it even more unpredictably helped give birth to neoconservatism (1970s-present), and to ideas that helped remake America's political landscape.

Commentary Magazine 1945-1959
by Nathan Abrams
Vallentine Mitchell, 221 pp., $75

Regrettably, however, *Commentary* has not yet had its Boswell—or even its Gay Talese, whose biography of the *New York Times* masterfully reported on a journalistic institution in transition. This new book by a young British historian aims to fill the gap.

Yet Nathan Abrams's study, rich in research but anemic in interpretation, stops short of the magazine's most exciting years. It chooses, instead, to focus on the man who founded the magazine and edited it until his suicide in 1959. Elliot E. Cohen, a child prodigy from Mobile, Alabama, who

Benjamin Balint is a fellow at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem.

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entered Yale at 14, emerges here as a talkative polymath who felt intensely protective of his writers even as he bullied them. "Himself badly blocked as a writer," Diana Trilling said, "he tried to turn his more productive friends into his literary spokesmen."

Abrams finds Cohen's politics as troubling as his editorial ventriloquism. Disappointed by *Commentary*'s record on McCarthyism, he says that, by 1952, Cohen "had achieved a complete whitewash" of American anti-Communist hysteria and the accompanying "steady erosion" of civil liberties. He seconds Irving Howe's judgment that Cohen's anti-communism became "a crippling rigidity."

Then he calls into question the motives of that stance itself. After mentioning CIA funding for anti-Communist organizations such as the Committee for Cultural Freedom, Abrams writes:

> As a large number of those involved in such covertly funded activities were part of the Commentariat [Abrams's unwieldy term for the editors and writers around the magazine], one wonders if the ascent of *Commentary* in the late 1940s and 1950s, and the simultaneous onset of the cultural Cold War into which the CIA was pouring billions of dollars, was merely a coincidence. . . . For all their bellyaching and ranting against Stalinism, how much of their motivation was ideological and how much financial?

Abrams has elsewhere joined to this innuendo a critique of the later *Commentary*:

> In his thirst for success, [Norman] Podhoretz destroyed the magazine that Cohen had created. He may have achieved a higher circulation, a greater profile and more influence than Cohen would have, but he did so at the exorbitant price of sacrificing *Commentary*'s quality and critical intellectual independence. . . . The principles of serious journalism, policy, and scholarship were abandoned, as *Commentary* became a spokes-journal for the Right.

At the end of his book, Abrams puts the matter somewhat more crudely: "If *Commentary* was chaste under Cohen, it would lose its virginity under Podhoretz."

It is by now a liberal cliché to lament *Commentary*'s "decline" into neocon smugness, sanctimony, and political lockstep. But the cliché, thickened by Abrams's preference for political virginity, obscures clear thinking about the links between the magazine's neocon present and its New York Jewish intellectual past.

It may at first glance appear strange, for instance, that the magazine that helped incubate neoconservatism was founded by the American Jewish Committee in 1945 "to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues." It may seem odd that the same little magazine hosted the best of Jewish-American fiction and literary criticism; that it ran Norman Mailer's six-part series on Martin Buber's "Tales of the Hasidim" and Gershom Scholem's essays on kabbalah; that it brought together symposia on "The Condition of Jewish Belief" and that it was the first American publication to excerpt Anne Frank's diary. What has all this to do with the neocons?

Much to the detriment of his account, the essential question slips Abrams's grasp, and with it a fascinating chapter in American political journalism: How did *Commentary*, by hosting the Americanization of the Jewish mind, in turn release new and potent forces that continue to shape American literature and politics today?

The answer begins in the ways the *Commentary* crowd dramatically re-envisioned Jewish identity. Though Cohen and his early staff—Clement Greenberg, Nathan Glazer, Robert Warshow, and Irving Kristol—were little acquainted with Jewish institutional life, the magazine they ran came to play no small role in refashioning a transplanted old-world culture into something distinctly American. Cohen predicted as much in 1947: "We Jews in America will live very deeply immersed in the culture of our general American society. This is not only unavoidable—it is eminently desirable."

According to his successor, Cohen's credo represented the magazine's grand design: "To lead the family out of the desert of alienation in which it had been wandering for so long and into the promised land of democratic, pluralistic, prosperous America where it would live as blessedly in its Jewishness as in its Americanness." In so doing, it helped create America's first intelligentsia, one stripped of the anti-bourgeois strains that defined its European models.

Along the way, *Commentary* transformed Jewish writing by demanding that it conform to the very highest standards. "As to Jewish culture," Cohen said, "the first question we should ask is not whether it is Jewish, but whether it is good. And 'good' means on a par with the best in the culture of society in general."

This new attitude—sometimes taken for irreverence or snobbishness—looked askance at defensive apologetics, sentimentality, and self-congratulation, and it earned *Commentary* angry attacks from some quarters of the Jewish community.

But the magazine also earned Judaism the attention of intellectuals, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. Taking Judaism seriously made *Commentary* home to some of the most sophisticated writing in English on Jewish history, literature, theology, and the Bible, and also made it the embodiment of the proposition that there need be no contradiction between ethnic particularism and participation in the larger culture.

Not all of the barriers to participation were self-induced, of course. Jews were commonly kept out of the highest echelons of American life and letters, and for an example we need look no farther than Elliot Cohen himself. Despite a brilliant academic record, his academic ambitions were dismissed by one of the eminences of his university's English department: "Mr. Cohen, you are a very competent young man, but it is hard for me to imagine a Hebrew teaching the Protestant tradition to young men at Yale."

Somehow, this did not discourage Cohen from declaring in the inaugural

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issue: "*Commentary* is an act of faith in our possibilities in America." Those possibilities were soon explosively realized. The new posture—a kind of cultural being-at-ease—stiffened by the conviction that Jews could fully participate in American life as Jews, freed the American Jewish fictional voice, making *Commentary* vital in launching and advancing such writers as Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud, Joseph Heller, Cynthia Ozick, and I.B. Singer.

The *Commentary* crowd's second contribution, of course, was to American politics. The magazine's founding generation—ex-radicals who had come of age in the shadow of the Great Depression—considered the Soviet Union (in the words of an article the magazine ran in 1946) "the greatest challenge democracy has ever confronted." *Commentary* served to midwife the notion that the United States ought to wage an ideological campaign by exporting American values abroad. By the time the Korean war brought the Cold War into full chill, the "New York intellectuals" had discovered that their critique of Stalinism bore great relevance to American foreign policy.

The rest, as they say, is history: The magazine's sharp radical turn after Podhoretz took the reins in 1960; its repulsion toward the New Left's shrill anti-Americanism and antipathy to Israel after the 1967 war; its hopes of redeeming the Democratic party—or at least of holding it faithful to the party's (Henry) Jackson wing; the growing awareness of the conservative implications of its own line of thinking; the rise of the neoconservative sensibility—and influence.

As *Commentary* contributor Alfred Kazin said, "Those who had so long talked of alienation, who had proved the iron necessity of alienation, who had loved the theory of alienation and especially *their* alienation, were now with the government of the United States as advisers on Communism." But the neocons did not merely trade alienation for blind affirmation. Neoconservatism, one might instead suggest, represents the culmination of the fitful love affair between America and its Jews.

The historian of modern American conservatism, George Nash, puts it this way:

> In 1945, *Commentary* had been born into a marginal, impoverished, immigrant-based subculture and an intellectual milieu that touted 'alienation' and 'critical nonconformity' as the true marks of the intellectual vis-à-vis his own culture. Two generations later, *Commentary* stood in the mainstream of American culture, and even of American conservatism, as a celebrant of the fundamental goodness of the American regime. . . . It was a stunning achievement.

In chronicling that achievement, a biography of *Commentary* must explain—as Abrams does not—how the magazine both reflected and contributed to a growing appreciation among Jews of certain American democratic principles and freedoms; how, as sons of immigrants, and beneficiaries of these freedoms, they were well placed to discern them especially clearly, and to defend them especially vigorously. Such a book would tell the story of how a little Jewish magazine, gathering to itself the great American political and literary themes, transformed—and was transformed by—America. ♦

Hamilton's Virtue

How Aristotle's philosophy led to the American economy. **BY MARK BLITZ**

Critics of America make endless complaints. Our liberty is selfish license that corrodes community. Our equality is a fraud that barely veils vast gaps between the undeserving rich and the undeservedly poor. Our silly arts seek a common denominator ever lower and more vulgar. Our faith is narrow-minded, irrational, priggish, and hypocritical. Our sciences threaten to destroy or degrade us. Our mad consumption leaves nothing for the future. What's more, we spread our corruption globally through imperial might wrapped in the delusion that it is liberal justice.

Aristotle and Hamilton on Commerce and Statesmanship
by Michael D. Chan
Missouri, 236 pp., $44.95

Hearing all this, one would think that American life is solitary, poor, nasty, and brutish, and our power soon to be thankfully short.

These concerns are excessive because they project the worst possibilities as if they were actual or inevitable, and not counteracted by better ones. Freedom is enterprise and responsibility, not only license. Equality is equality in rights whose exercise leads unsurprisingly to inequalities in wealth. Faith and reason can be generously allied. Outposts of beauty and intellect stand against our encroaching wilderness. Science properly guided is beneficial. Limiting or transforming tyrannies abroad serves foreign citizens as well as our own.

Although these criticisms of America are excessive, they are not altogether absurd. Most mirror old concerns, theoretical and practical. Democracy means vulgarity, and we are democratic. Abstraction corrodes habit and seeks general sway, and we are based on universal principles. Unchecked individual ends demand unlimited technological means, and our desires

Mark Blitz, Fletcher Jones professor of political philosophy at Claremont McKenna College, is most recently the author of Duty Bound: Responsibility and American Public Life.

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seem unbounded. Commerce may allow opportunity but, in time, it favors those already wealthy.

So, although the United States is a living answer to the excesses of these worries, we are successful only because our policies and principles take them seriously.

Michael Chan's practical purpose in *Aristotle and Hamilton* is to defend America by showing that we are not as bad as excessive criticism makes us seem. His vehicle is to show how Alexander Hamilton believed that American commerce and manufacturing would enhance not just prosperity but also our security, union, virtue, and a liberal public good that would support the arts and sciences and end slavery.

Chan also has two theoretical purposes. One is to recast the debate about the relative importance of liberal acquisitiveness and so-called republican virtue in the American founding. He shows, through Hamilton, that commerce and virtue need not contradict, and reminds us of the slave-owning self-interestedness often disguised by Virginians' republican blather.

His other, related, academic purpose is to narrow the gap between ancient and modern (post-Machiavellian) thinkers. He does this by showing that Aristotle was friendlier to commerce than he appears, and Hamilton friendlier to virtue. For each, the economic is subordinate to the properly political, and the properly political an arm or element of excellence.

The salutary effect of Chan's work is to increase or reaffirm one's admiration for his three protagonists—Aristotle, Hamilton, and the United States of America—by showing where each is consistent with the others. Hamilton's political sagacity is, in Chan's presentation, especially impressive, almost startlingly so. As best one can tell, he was correct about almost every important issue. The one exception is national expansion, where Hamilton's reasons for opposition were good (he feared that more land would mean a continuing agrarian economy) but manifestly not good enough.

The crux of Chan's discussion is virtue. That countries devoted to commercial acquisitiveness would diminish their citizens' characters was once the chief complaint against them. Today, despite a generation of discussion, the complaint (lodged in these terms) still seems slightly quaint. It enters the list with which I began mostly indirectly. Yet the problem of virtue is vital to whatever is reasonable in each of our current concerns.

Immorality is also a major fault that Islamic religious tyrants find with the West. Moreover, their view that we are soft and weak encourages their hopes or fantasies of fundamentalist Islamic reconquest and rebirth. So by exploring and challenging "the virtue-commerce antinomy," Chan exposes both the classical core and virulent contemporary expression of unease or distress with acquisitive liberal democracy.

Chan discusses Hamilton's view of the link between virtue and commerce—or, more broadly, the political goals of his economic recommendations—under five headings. He summarizes his position in advance by claiming that "Hamilton recognized a need for ancient as well as modern prudence in the practice of politics." The advantages of commerce outweigh disadvantages such as vicious luxury and moral licentiousness. I will report Chan's main points, but cannot do justice to the subtlety and intricacy of his arguments.

First is the contribution that commerce and manufacturing make to national prosperity, a contribution that depends on equal freedom: "True liberty, by protecting the exertions of talents and industry and securing to them their justly acquired fruits, tends more powerfully than any other cause to augment the mass of national wealth." Indeed, the American "spirit of enterprise," writes Chan, "is in itself an inexhaustible mine of national wealth." Hamilton believed it "easier and more humane" to arrange matters so that interest and ambition, rather than fierce courage and self-renouncing public spiritedness, are the major supports of the public good.

Hamilton also argued that vigorous commerce aids national defense. The Revolutionary War led him to see that "only a nation with a manufacturing base and an advanced system of public finance" would win wars, because war has been revolutionized by the modern "arts of industry and the science of finance." In addition, manufacturing would especially benefit from technology, for Hamilton believed it particularly well suited to the use and invention of machines.

Hamilton also thought that national commerce would help to cement the federal union and produce "a distinctly American economy." It would serve our mutual wants, and tie manufacturing to agriculture, as long as statesmen helped citizens to see that their enlightened self-interest required such a blend. Commerce also would "promote a gradual assimilation of temper and sentiments among citizens."

The political goals commerce serves are connected to Hamilton's belief that "commercial virtue" is "necessary for a prosperous, orderly, and just nation." The traditional view of the moral superiority of farmers is incorrect. Farmers' agitation for debt relief and easy money shows that they are more self-interested than pure. Indeed, the agrarian South and West depended on slavery, an institution more corrupt than anything commerce and manufacturing fostered.

By contrast, commerce and manufacturing give regular work to many not usually engaged in business, and furnish great "scope for the diversity of talents and dispositions among individuals." They make men more industrious and inventive, and expand their choices. Manufacturing, especially, gives the able opportunities for spirited and useful enterprise. And because a commercial nation depends on sound money and banks, it also encourages "punctuality, thrift, industry, responsibility in fulfilling contracts, and prudent financial management."

Finally, Hamilton thought that commerce would provide resources to enhance "public splendor," liberality, and national greatness. The "moral horizon of American politics" is more than "the ceaseless pursuit of security and prosperity." Liberality would replace the ancient republics' "excessive devotion to . . . military glory."

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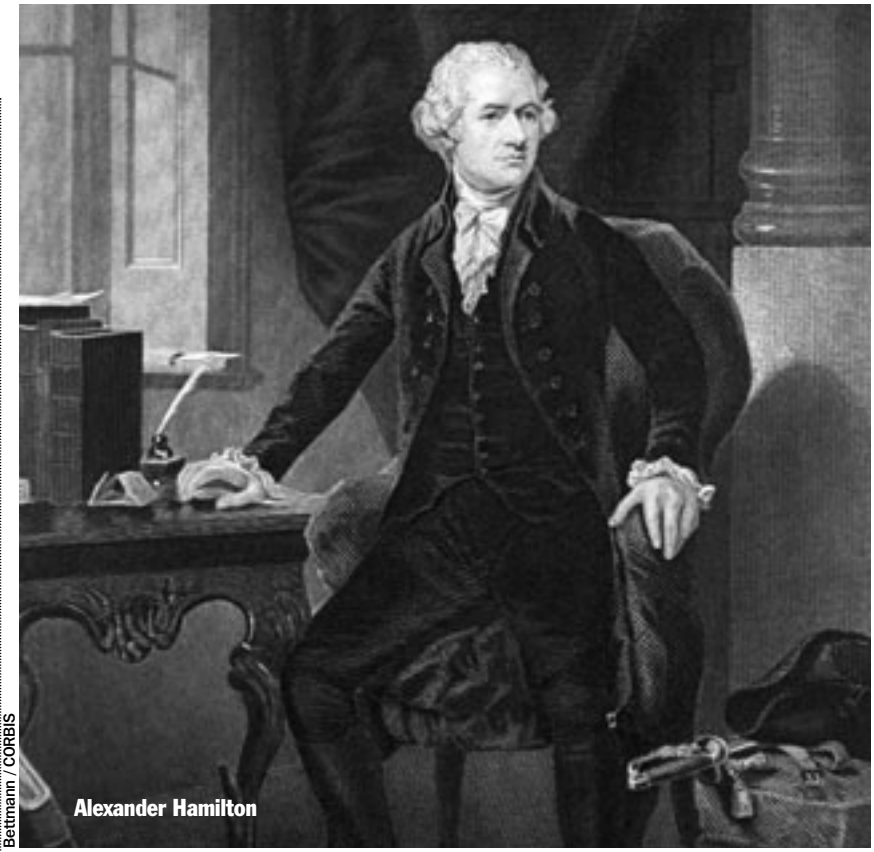
Hamilton's challenge here "was to reconcile magnanimity or the longing for splendor among great men with the natural rights of mankind, or consent." Commerce would allow the ambitious to "build great commercial empires" and practice liberality grounded on agreement, not slavery and plunder. Indeed, consent and affection, as opposed to fear, served "not only to limit but also to invigorate the powers of government."

The chief "enlarged plans of public good" that Hamilton had in mind for the United States were to promote industry, secure the independence of the new world from the old, end slavery, and advance the arts and sciences. Beyond his own efforts through foreign policy and state abolition societies, Hamilton thought that industrial, mechanical, and commercial development is the best economic alternative to slavery, and further undermines it by "softening and humanizing" mores, especially those of masterful men. Commerce also provides leisure to cultivate the arts and sciences and resources to communicate enlightened opinion. Here, government needs to support institutions such as a national university where there is little prospect of immediate economic gain.

Chan makes clear how, in Hamilton's eyes, commerce and industry serve political, ethical, and intellectual ends greater than wealth alone, and are coherent with prudence and virtue. Chan's discussion is a highly intelligent contribution to the theoretical and practical issues he faces, and makes telling and sometimes novel use of *The Federalist*, *Report on Manufactures*, and Hamilton's other works.

To address these matters more completely, of course, we would need to consider additional questions. One is the problem of religion or religious toleration, especially important in light of Islamic opposition to the West. Hamilton's acquisitive, energetic, commercial, manufacturing republic is no friend to the dominance of a single religion, or the dominance of religion simply. It weakens communal rootedness and strengthens secular excitement and opportunity. This dilutes religious attachments, even beyond the effect of legal tolerance.



Bettmann / CORBIS

Alexander Hamilton

Is this attenuation something that liberal political Founders expected, desired, or ignored? Did they believe, say, that the kind of faith Tocqueville noticed would survive or grow, or would even this have surprised them? Aristotle's virtue seems largely secular, if not wholly so, not merely pre-Christian, and therefore friendly to pride and magnificence, but also secured without excessive reliance on the gods.

Is this secular emphasis also true of modern liberalism? To fully grasp the effect of commerce on virtue, especially today, we should, in addition to other questions, examine the link between virtue and piety, or morality and faithful obedience. How, in particular, did Hamilton see the effect of his economics on religion, and the effect of religion on morality? Chan touches on this question near the end, but does not explore it.

Also connected to this problem is how Hamilton would have demonstrated the rationality of natural rights. This is unclear in Chan's presentation. Belief in humans' natural equality provides a substantial foundation for freedom, property, and responsibility. But this equality is secured best as a natural truth, not a mere opinion. Only in its rational universalism is this belief a sufficient check on—and indication of superiority to—an obedient faith whose sway, however vast, cannot accord with reason.

Natural rights do not tell us all that reason can about natural excellence. Consent based on equal rights is always in some tension with intellectual virtue. The task of closing the gap between ancients and moderns is limited not just by differences of belief and circumstance, but by the variety of natural truths among which prudence must, in practice, steer. To explore this question you would need to pair Aristotle or Plato with someone other than Alexander Hamilton, who, as Chan informs us, did not pretend to be philosophic.

I was a member of Michael Chan's dissertation committee, a fact I reveal in the hope that kind (or moralistic) readers will now attribute my mistakes to accidental prejudice rather than incorrigible foolishness! The excellent book he has shaped from his thesis is a bulwark against the degrading of American principles. It is also a safeguard against complacent patriotism. ♦

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Lincoln's Fifth Column

Northern Democrats versus the Great Emancipator.

BY FRED BARNES

As if Abraham Lincoln didn't have enough distractions while pursuing a war to restore the Union, he also had to worry about what he called "the fire in the rear."

He was speaking metaphorically. The fire was actually a group of Northern Democrats known as Copperheads. They opposed the Civil War, sympathized with the Southern secessionists, were mostly racists themselves, loathed Lincoln, blamed him and not the Southerners for starting the bloody fight, and impeded the war effort in whatever way they could, some of them treasonous or close to it. As a threat to the survival of America as a united country, Lincoln feared them almost as much as he did battlefield defeats at the hands of the Confederates.

Copperheads
The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North
by Jennifer L. Weber
Oxford, 286 pp., $28

The Copperheads didn't choose their name. They thought of themselves as Peace Democrats or true conservatives committed to preserving the Constitution and preventing Lincoln from grabbing too much presidential power. They were dubbed Copperheads in a letter to the editor in the *Cincinnati Commercial* in 1861 that suggested the term on the basis of Genesis 3:14: "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." The name stuck.

Historians haven't paid the Copperheads much attention, and the few who took up the subject have treated them largely as a footnote to the Civil War era. But they mattered, and mattered enormously, and one of the great merits of Jennifer L. Weber's brief history of the Copperheads is that it takes them seriously. So does James M. McPherson, the renowned Civil War scholar at Princeton: "The danger to the Northern war effort posed by Copperhead political activities was far more than a figment of Republican imagination," he writes in his foreword.

What exactly did the Copperheads do? They undermined the war wherever they could, particularly in the areas north of the Ohio River to which Southerners had migrated—Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. When the Confederate marauder John Hunt Morgan rampaged through Indiana and Ohio in 1863, his actions "were so specifically targeted that locals could only surmise that their Copperhead neighbors had briefed his men," Weber writes.

More broadly, the antiwar faction's vituperative opposition hurt the ability of the Union army to carry out the war effectively. The Copperheads' "resistance to conscription and their encouragement of less ideologically minded Americans to dodge the draft or desert the army forced the military to divide its attention and at times send troops home to keep order there," according to Weber. That's how serious the Copperhead problem was.

Initially a splinter group, the Copperheads grew into a powerful political force that dominated the Democratic convention of 1864, wrote the party platform, handpicked one of their own as presidential nominee George McClellan's running mate, and came perilously close to defeating Lincoln's bid for reelection.

They weren't all rubes from what was then the West. Former Connecticut governor Thomas Seymour was a leading Copperhead. Governor Horatio Seymour of New York and Mayor Fernando Wood of New York City were Copperheads. (New York City was an antiwar hotbed.) Samuel F.B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph, was a Copperhead. The most famous was the demagogic congressman from Ohio, Clement Vallandigham, who was convicted by a military court for his attacks on Lincoln and the war, and then banished from the country by Lincoln. Vallandigham went to Canada.

The Copperheads grew as a political force in three phases. The first came with secession. They tended to believe the South could legally withdraw from the Union because the Constitution didn't expressly forbid it. When Lincoln suspended habeas corpus as a wartime measure, they became fervent opponents.

"The second phase," Weber writes, "began with the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862, and extended into the following spring, when the Union adopted a draft." Racist Northern Democrats—there were many—who had backed the war to maintain the Union joined the opposition when the war became an effort to free the slaves.

The third phase came with the horrendous losses suffered by the Union army in 1864. Not only had Grant's army stalled, it lost 60,000 troops in a single six-week period. Antiwar sentiment reached its height and "thousands of Northerners were clamoring for peace. The Copperheads, with their antiwar stance and harsh criticisms of the president, offered an appealing alternative to Lincoln's stubborn determination to stay the course."

The antiwar furor prompted editor Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune* to make a fool of himself. He wrote Lincoln, urging him to open peace negotiations with the South. In response, Lincoln told Greeley to seek out "any person anywhere professing

Fred Barnes, executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *is the author of* Rebel-in-Chief: Inside the Bold and Controversial Presidency of George W. Bush.

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Bettmann / CORBIS

The New York draft riots, 1863

to have any proposition of Jefferson Davis in writing, for peace, embracing the restoration of the Union and abandonment of slavery." If he found such a person, Lincoln said he would guarantee him safe passage to Washington. Greeley met with Southerners in Canada, but they turned out to be spies with no authority to join peace talks. Greeley became a national laughingstock. A rival editor called him a "nincompoop without genius."

Copperheadism reached high tide at the Democratic convention in late August 1864. It was a Copperhead convention. Democratic leaders let Vallandigham write the platform, which said the war was "a failure" and called for a peace treaty with the South. One of the most hardline Copperheads, George Pendleton, was the party's unanimous choice for vice president. And the McClellan-Pendleton ticket emerged as the favorite to defeat Lincoln and the Republicans.

"Then came Atlanta," Weber writes. As the Democrats were meeting, Sherman was driving the Confederates out of Atlanta and taking the city. "When the news arrived, the mood in the North made a 180-degree turn. Despair gave way to cheerful—almost giddy—confidence." The press joined in the giddiness. The political impact was immediate and sweeping. Support for McClellan collapsed. And Lincoln, already bolstered by overwhelming support from Union soldiers outraged by the Copperheads, was suddenly assured of reelection. In fact, Union troops, hundreds of thousands strong, became lifelong Republicans.

Weber's highly readable account of the short life span of the Copperheads is especially valuable because it redresses a historical oversight, and also points intriguingly to a current political struggle. The oversight was to give Copperheads short shrift by minimizing their role in the Civil War and the trouble they caused Lincoln. The analogy with today is between the Copperheads and Democrats who oppose President Bush on Iraq and are critical of the war on terror.

Weber draws no analogy with Democrats today. She sticks to history. But I think the analogy is inescapable—not that Democrats are unpatriotic or treasonous. But like the Copperheads, antiwar Democrats have grown in numbers as victory in the war—in Iraq now—has faded from sight. They've weakened the president's tools in combating terrorists and made that effort more difficult. And Democrats today have offered no real alternative, merely a seemingly irresistible impulse to retreat from Iraq.

Something similar was true with the Copperheads. "They never offered a coherent alternative to Lincoln's plan—war—nor did they ever acknowledge the Confederates' own resolve to gain independence," writes Weber. On that last point—the South's rejoining the Union—talks with the South would have been worthless since Southern leaders were insistent on secession. So, too, I suspect, would be one-on-one talks (favored by Democrats) with America's enemies now, such as North Korea and Iran.

I have one quibble with Weber's otherwise wonderful book. She labels the Copperheads "conservatives." But were they? They were soft on slavery. They were not patriotic. They fomented violent protests. They interpreted the Constitution in a way that would have crippled a wartime president. They hated the war more than they loved the Union.

Does that qualify them as conservative? I think not. ♦

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When Bobby Met Eli

Radical Chic on the streets of New Haven.

BY DAVID ADESNIK

Alex Rackley lay strapped to a bed, his body covered with second-degree burns that had begun to fester. Rackley had endured three days of interrogation, beatings, and torture in the basement of a New Haven townhouse. Rackley was 19 years old and a Black Panther, a member of the revolutionary party committed to the overthrow of America's white establishment. Rackley had been tortured by other Black Panthers who suspected him of being a police informant. The precise details of Rackley's interrogation and torture survive to this day because the Panthers' chose to tape Rackley's travails.

On the night of May 20, 1969, Rackley's fellow Panthers took him out of bed, forced him into a car, and drove him out to the muddy banks of a small river in rural Connecticut. Then they shot him once in the back of the head and once in the chest. For the FBI, Rackley's murder was not an isolated crime. It was a chance to destroy the organization that J. Edgar Hoover had described as "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country."

The police and FBI quickly apprehended the two men who shot Rackley. Both men confessed and then agreed to testify on behalf of the state. Now the Feds were ready to bring in Bobby Seale, the Panthers' national chairman, and charge him with murder.

Set for May 1970, Seale's trial became a national sensation. Protesters from across the nation planned to descend on New Haven in order to protect their black champion from the injustice of the white judicial system.

For Yale president Kingman Brewster, the protests were a potential nightmare. A march at Harvard on Seale's behalf quickly turned into a riot. The campus suffered considerable damage and more than 200 hospitalizations were required. Whereas 1,500 protesters marched in Cambridge, Brewster expected anywhere from 10 to 100 times that number in New Haven, where both Yale and the courthouse were adjacent to the central green.

Murder in the Model City
The Black Panthers, Yale, and the Redemption of a Killer
by Paul Bass and Douglas W. Rae
Basic Books, 304 pp., $26.00

Murder in the Model City is the story of Rackley's murder and the trial that followed, told primarily from the perspective of Warren Kimbro, the Panther who shot Rackley in the back of the head. Paul Bass and Douglas Rae sat down with Kimbro on 29 separate occasions to record his life story. Bass, Rae, and Kimbro are all prominent figures in New Haven. Bass served as an editor for 15 years at the *New Haven Advocate*. Rae has been on the faculty at Yale for almost 40 years. And for more than 20 years, Kimbro has served as the head of Project MORE, a rehabilitation program for ex-cons. Rae serves on the board of Project MORE.

Kimbro spent less than five years in prison for Rackley's murder. Kimbro was a model prisoner. He published an award-winning prison newspaper and persuaded his fellow inmates to improve their behavior. He got a bachelor's degree from a local college and even enrolled in a master's degree program at Harvard, from which he graduated shortly after his release from prison.

Kimbro, now in his seventies, has clearly led a remarkable life. But what is the broader significance of both his crimes and his accomplishments? Bass and Rae sometimes write as if they were telling the story of one man, sometimes as if they were telling the story of a generation.

On occasion, they draw broad lessons about American history and politics from an incident in Kimbro's life. Yet they never develop their analysis beyond the depth of a few sentences. Indeed, they conclude their very first chapter by writing that the details of Alex Rackley's death and Warren Kimbro's life are important because:

> The facts would prove central to the story of how America lost its innocence at the end of the sixties . . . An idealistic youth powered movement that helped stop a war and rewrite civil rights laws succumbed to fratricide and exhaustion. The facts were relevant to how liberalism became a dirty word and how questioning people in power became un-American.

In spite of their nostalgia for the age of protest and for the "innocence" of the era, Bass and Rae never hesitate to show how the radicalism of the left helped make liberalism a dirty word. Even to those familiar with the Panthers' history, the violence of their rhetoric is striking. As momentum built in the weeks before the New Haven protests, Panther chief of staff David Hilliard told 2,000 students at the University of Connecticut, "not only will we burn buildings, we will take lives. We will blow up buildings. We will kill judges." If Seale went to prison, Hilliard said, "we're going to unleash a race war on the pigs of America, and it's up to you, as white revolutionists, to support the struggle of black people."

These are the words of a terrorist organization. To a certain extent, it is not surprising that slavery and Jim Crow infected their victims with some of their own depravity. Far more puzzling, however, is why untold thousands of young, white, well-educated, middle-class protesters identified more with a violent revolutionary front than with an established order that protect-

David Adesnik, a policy analyst in Washington, is the editor of OxBlog.com.

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ed their right to speak, assemble, and protest. It is imperative to understand the motivation of such white radicals because it was they, and not other blacks, who provided the Panthers with their political clout.

As Bass and Rae take care to point out, black New Haven resented the threat of violence and property damage that Panther-led protests brought to their city. In addition, black New Haven ruthlessly criticized the white radicals whose allegiance made the Panthers so dangerous. The community's leaders wrote that "the white radical, by frantically and selfishly seeking his personal psychological release," effectively exploits blacks in an essentially racist manner. So were the black leaders right? Was white radicalism a perversion of white middle-class guilt? And why did it affect almost exclusively the young? Kingman Brewster, an arch-liberal, rejected all that the radicals stood for—although he handled them with a light touch in order to defuse their penchant for violence. The *New York Times* editorialized that support for the Panthers had "plunged campus activism into new depths of irrationality."

Admirably, Bass and Rae never let their fond memories of the past cloud their judgment of the Panthers' young, white fellow travelers. "Panthermania," they write, "crossed the wires of normally lucid young people's brains." But why did such wires get crossed? Given their extensive research and intimate familiarity with the radicals of the era, Bass and Rae might have given more consideration to the ideas that animated their protests, rather than focusing so much on the details of their actions. Although the story of the Panthers in New Haven is undoubtedly worth telling, the reader may want to know what its lessons are for today.

One potential lesson to take away from the story of Alex Rackley's murder is that America today is not nearly as polarized as journalists and politicians often say it is. In spite of furious disagreements about the war in Iraq, the tepid antiwar movement of today doesn't march under the insurgents' banner, the way that the protesters described by Bass and Rae carried the flag of the Viet Cong.

Sygma / CORBIS / P. Laffont

Black Panthers cavort on the statue of former Yale president Theodore Dwight Woolsey, May 1970.

Yet in some quarters, the American left still glorifies the Panthers and what they stood for. In June 2001, an arts festival in New Haven brought together a panel of former Panthers and Panther supporters to reflect on the events of May 1970. Bass and Rae report that "the mostly white, Yale-affiliated young audience cheered [the panel] as they presented a portrait of a heroic party destroyed by an evil government." Even one of Kingman Brewster's erstwhile lieutenants told the audience to follow the example set by the Panthers. The only panel member who spoke out against this return to irrationality was Warren Kimbro. He told the audience, "I don't want you to pick up a gun like me. I want you to do this revolution by getting into Yale Law School."

Should we be concerned that America's best students are educated at institutions where Bobby Seale (who was on the panel that day) is welcomed as a hero? Probably not. Ignorant nostalgia is very different from true radicalism. These days, Seale is hawking books about his prowess at barbecue—or, as he calls it, "BobbyQue." The enterprising chairman has even composed a "Barbeque Bill of Rights." And campus leftism today has mostly lost out to the kind of well-behaved liberalism that Kingman Brewster would have endorsed. It may give students some strange ideas, but election day 2006 notwithstanding, it hasn't prevented conservatives from winning elections, either. ♦

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Betjemanesque Memories

A centennial retrospective of a 'major minor poet.'

BY BEVIS HILLIER

If you write a biography of Oscar Wilde or George Bernard Shaw, as my friends Richard Ellmann and Michael Holroyd have respectively done, the books sell in America. My life of John Betjeman has been a top bestseller in Britain; but only a puny number of copies have sold in the United States. Why is that? An American friend (I worked at the *Los Angeles Times* for five years) explained: "He's too damn *Briddish*."

Though Betjeman had a foreign name—his immigrant ancestors were German—he became the most British . . . no, the most English of English poets. He writes about things that are peculiarly English, in a peculiarly English style. To understand him, you need to know about gymkhanas, Women's Institutes, the difference between Cooper's Oxford marmalade and Golden Shred marmalade, the social rank that use of the phrase "beg pardon" betrays, and the last night of the Proms (the riotous final concert of the season at the Royal Albert Hall, London, where the audience sings "Land of Hope and Glory" and "Rule Britannia").

Dylan Thomas tried to introduce Betjeman poems to an audience of bobby soxers in the 1940s; later, Philip Larkin, a poet often compared to Betjeman, also tried the experiment. Neither was wholly successful, and they are hard acts to follow; but I'll have a go.

I first met him, through a happy accident, in 1971, when he was 65 and I was 31. My mother—who had some of the more benign attributes of a witch—would have said our encounter was "meant." In 1969 I had been invited to a boardroom lunch at the *Times*, on whose staff I had served for six years. I found myself sitting next to the wine correspondent of the newspaper, Colonel Andrew Graham. He was rather like a colonel in an Agatha Christie whodunit; ramrod back, clipped accent, neat isosceles moustache. After awhile, I noticed that he was brushing the wine waiter aside.

"Is Lord Thomson's wine so filthy?" I asked, referring to the Canadian proprietor of the *Times*.

Graham replied: "You're meant to know something about pottery and porcelain, aren't you?" (I had had a book published on those subjects the previous year.) "How would you like it, if every lunch you went to, you were asked to turn the soup-plate upside down and pronounce on the quality of the ware? Well, that's the sort of thing that happens to me with wine. So I'm having beer instead."

That broke the ice. We chatted and in the year that followed became friends. One day, in 1971, Graham said to me: "Look, I used to be comptroller of the British Embassy in Paris—in charge of catering—under both Duff Cooper and Gladwyn Jebb. As a result, I know virtually everyone who's anyone. What I propose to do is this: I shall invite you, and any two people of your choice, to lunch at my flat in the Charterhouse [London]. Whom do you choose?"

After some careful thought, I chose Sir John Betjeman and Lady Diana Cooper—the celebrated beauty and wit whom men had already been clambering on to tables to look at when she arrived at parties in 1912.

Because Graham was wine correspondent of *The Times*, he received superb samples of wine—I think there was even a Pétrus. Those lubricated the conversation, and we all got on. That summer, I had organized a big exhibition of Art Deco in Minneapolis. I presented Betjeman with the catalog. He riffled through it enthusiastically, then declared that I had totally converted him to the jazzy 1920s Hoover Building in London. I may be giving myself airs, but I have a feeling that, in some sense, he saw his mantle falling on my shoulders—in that he had championed the despised Victorians; and now here was I, trying to do much the same for the then-abominated Deco style.

After that I met him quite often: first in his flat in Cloth Fair, near Smithfield Market in the City of London; later, for lunch, in a little Italian restaurant near his new home in Chelsea. It could be a bit of an ordeal, having lunch with Betjeman. He would insist on making remarks about other people in the restaurant, in a stentorian stage whisper: "I say, you see those chaps over there. Do you think they're *executives*? I expect they're discussing profit margins and feasibility surveys." And of one man: "That girl with him, do you think she's his secretary? Are they going back to his flat afterwards?" You could see the man's ears reddening.

Betjeman loved jokes. I remember three in particular. One day, the salmon-like fish called smelt was on the restaurant menu. He ordered it. Bringing the dish to our table, the waiter asked, "Are you smelt, sir?"

Betjeman: "Only by the discerning."

In 1972, he had been appointed Poet Laureate—poet by appointment to the Queen. When we met, I was living in Soho in a flat owned by Miss Christina Foyle, the bookseller. She had persuaded John Masefield, when he was Poet Laureate, to lay the foundation stone of the block of flats. The stone was engraved "LAID BY THE POET LAUREATE."

"Every nice girl's ambition," Betjeman commented.

He had been at Magdalen College, Oxford, with a man called Bede Griffiths, who became a Roman Catholic monk. One day I told Betjeman that Griffiths was going out to India to try

Bevis Hillier is the author of the three-volume authorized biography of Sir John Betjeman.

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to reconcile Roman Catholicism and Hinduism.

"Oh, I see," said Betjeman, "combining mumbo and jumbo in roughly equal proportions."

But it was not all jokes. I found with Betjeman—as I have found with only one other great writer I have known (Iris Murdoch)—that he wanted to know everything about you; and it seemed the most natural thing in the world to tell him what you believed, whom you loved, or what was worrying you. And always he gave you that complete empathy that informs most of his poetry.

We tended to drink quite a lot at lunch. One day, after a specially boozy session, we were walking back to his Chelsea flat—he on the sidewalk, I in the gutter. There was just one of his poems that I had learned by heart—"Indoor Games near Newbury." It is about the kind of love you can feel for another child at a children's party, in this case set in the 1930s. As we walked along, I began by reciting the poem. I think he was tickled pink that I had bothered to memorize it; and he joined in—

Rich the makes of motor whirring,
Past the pine plantation purring.
Come up, Hupmobile, Delage!
Short the way your chauffeurs travel,
Crunching over private gravel,
Each from out his warm garáge.

Hulton-Deutsch Collection / CORBIS

Sir John Betjeman

In 1976 I resigned from my job as editor of *The Connoisseur*, an art-and-antiques magazine, because my salary was less than that of a New York dustman. I wrote my boss what I will call my "double or quits" letter—"Double my salary, or I quit"—and he said, "Quit." Betjeman wrote to me, "Are you suffering from Angst?" (his favorite word of the moment) and invited me to lunch, that sovereign remedy for all ills. At lunch I asked whether I might become his authorized biographer; and after some obstacles had been rolled out of the way, he agreed to that.

I also had to meet his formidable wife Penelope, Lady Betjeman, the daughter of the Field-Marshal Lord Chetwode, who had been commander in chief of the army in India. She eyed me up and down.

"Do you ride?"

"Well, I never have done, but perhaps you could teach me."

She snorted: "It's *awfully* hard on the ponies, teaching beginners, but you'd better come and stay."

I went to stay with her in the spartan cottage near Hay-on-Wye, Herefordshire. The moment I arrived, I was put on the back of a pony and she shouted "*Trrrrot!*" When the creature came to a juddering halt, with steam coming out of its nostrils, I was still, miraculously, in the saddle. I had passed muster, and that evening we made the first of many tape recordings. She was entirely candid about everything. She also cooked an excellent dinner.

Back in London, I began tape-recording Betjeman, too. He told me, among other things, how as a schoolboy he had begun a correspondence (about literature) with Lord Alfred Douglas, the former lover of Oscar Wilde. Betjeman's father had discovered one of the letters and had told his son he was to stop writing to Douglas immediately. Betjeman also told me about his early visits to Ireland, when an Oxford undergraduate, to stay with the aristocrats like Lord Clonmore and Basil, Marquess of Dufferin and Ava.

I think he enjoyed that recording session. But there are usually difficulties in writing the life of a living or recently dead person (Betjeman died in 1984). If you write, say, the biography of Oliver Cromwell, you first read the books on him that already exist, and begin to form an opinion or two; then you go to the libraries and houses that

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hold the original source documents—there is no one to say you nay. But in the case of Betjeman, my main problem was his girlfriend, Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, sister of the then-Duke of Devonshire. She told me politely that she would not cooperate, that she wanted her privacy, and one could not quarrel with that: There is no law that says a woman has to cooperate with her boyfriend's official biographer.

However, it was clear to me that she was against any biography appearing, and that she was naturally influencing Betjeman's own thinking on the subject, as (though still married to Penelope) he lived with Lady Elizabeth, and whatever she had been to him in the early years of their relationship, she was effectively his nanny, too, ministering to his comfort and needs.

I saw that Betjeman was getting a "chilling of the feet." So I made the decision to desist from tape-recording him. I thought that if I went on doing so, Lady Elizabeth would ask him to tell his publisher, John Murray (who was also to be the publisher of the biography): "Stop this work." And if he did tell Murray that, Murray would stop it, because as a bestselling poet Betjeman was the goose that laid golden eggs for the firm.

Therefore, instead of going on recording Betjeman, I went to see all his friends and acquaintances, starting with the oldest, who might pop off first. I'm sure, as a result, I lost some priceless Betjeman anecdotes from the horse's mouth; but at the same time, by getting other people's opinions of him, I ended up with a much more objective portrait. I was even able to interview some of the old workmen who had worked for Betjeman's father, Ernest, who made high quality dressing tables, game boxes, and other furniture to be sold in top London stores like Asprey in Bond Street.

It was Ernest's great ambition that John, his only son, should enter that business as the fourth generation to do so. But, as Betjeman records in his long autobiographical poem *Summoned by Bells* (1960), when taken to the company's workshop as a child, "I dug the chisel deep into my hand." He was hopelessly impractical, and could never have made a success of the family business; but one of his father's old employees said to me, with bitterness, that by not becoming chairman and continuing it, "John Betjeman allowed a great firm to go to rack and ruin."

By "targeting" Betjeman's old friends, I met famous and, in most cases, delightful people whom otherwise I might never have encountered. One was the artist John Piper, perhaps Betjeman's closest male friend, and his wife Myfanwy, a muse to the poet who figures in two of his best poems. Piper loved to paint ancient buildings with a stormy sky in the background. During the Second World War King George VI asked him to paint a picture of Windsor Castle. While Piper was painting, in Windsor Great Park, the king came up behind him and said, "I'm sorry, Piper, it looks as if we're in for a fine day."

I also interviewed the cartoonist Osbert Lancaster, who had been at Oxford with Betjeman, and the art historian Anthony Blunt (later unmasked as a Soviet spy), who had been at school with him at Marlborough College. Betjeman had hated Marlborough, which was more like a concentration camp than a school in the 1920s. One terrible torture was practiced on boys who became unpopular. They were stripped of almost all their clothing, had ink and treacle poured over them, and were hoist up to the ceiling rafters in a huge wastepaper basket. (They then had to leave Marlborough forever.)

Betjeman lived in mortal fear that he would be "basketed," but as Blunt explained to me, "He made the bullies laugh, so they never victimized him."

Oxford for Betjeman was champagne after water. It was like the Ugly Duckling discovering he was a swan. At Marlborough he had been considered a bit of a dunce—no good at Greek and Latin, which were the subjects that mattered there. (The writer Beverley Nichols, who had been at the school not long before Betjeman, said that those two languages were taught "not just as if they were dead, but as if they had never lived.") At Oxford, too, he did not shine academically and began a long vendetta against his English tutor, C.S. Lewis, who is satirized in more than one of his poems. Lewis objected to Betjeman's attending his one-on-one tutorials in carpet slippers, or missing them altogether with feeble and clearly mendacious excuses when, in reality, he was out lunching with the smart set. But Betjeman was a star at parties.

One of his best friends was Lord Clonmore, later Earl of Wicklow. Unfortunately, Wicklow died before I could get to Ireland to record his recollections; but I met his widow, in Dun Laoghaire, a seaside suburb of Dublin where I had spent many holidays with my parents in my childhood. I told Lady Wicklow that I remembered an aged Lady French who lived in the Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, where we stayed. I asked her if by any chance she was the widow of the First World War field marshal Lord French.

"Goodness, no," she replied. "She had been a Miss Nixon; but I'm afraid we all called her 'Miss Knicks-off'!"

After Oxford, Betjeman had held various posts with not much success. He was a master at two preparatory schools. He would enter a classroom by the window and lie on the floor while teaching. He was an inefficient secretary to Sir Horace Plunkett, an Irish politician obsessed by the concept of "cooperative creameries." And he worked for a few years on *The Architectural Review* in London. While he got on well with the editor, Hubert de Cronin Hastings, he did not really fit in because Hastings was passionate about modern architecture, by Le Corbusier and others, while Betjeman liked arts-and-crafts and was gradually developing his taste for Victoriana.

In 1933 he married Penelope Chetwode. Her parents disapproved of him because he was a penniless, scruffy journalist and they would have preferred their daughter to marry an aristocrat with a pheasant shoot. "We ask people like him to our houses but we don't marry them," Lady Chetwode told her daughter.

The field marshal thought he had better get to know Betjeman, so he invited him to a grand white-tie dinner

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at the Savoy Hotel. Betjeman arranged to have a bow tie attached to a piece of elastic—something only a waiter would wear. During the course of the meal, he pulled the tie outwards and let it twang back into position, just to annoy his future father-in-law.

When the couple did finally marry, one of Chetwode's servants made the mistake of calling the young lady "Miss Penelope."

"She's not Miss Penelope," the field marshal barked. "She's Mrs. Bargeman."

The couple lived first in a London flat, then moved to a Berkshire farmhouse. They loved each other, but quarreled frequently. Their German maid long thought John's first name was "Shutup," as Penelope said that to him so often. But his financial prospects were improving. His father died in 1934, leaving him some money. In the same year, Betjeman became film critic of the *Evening Standard*. When he was asked to interview Myrna Loy, who was visiting London, he asked her, "Do you mind if I say you like English perpendicular [a style of medieval architecture]?"

"Fine by me, honey," Loy replied.

His first book of poems had appeared, in eccentric binding, in 1931; and from then on he made a name for himself, partly as a poet, but also as a broadcaster on radio and on television. He was already making television programs before the war. During the war he worked at the Ministry of Information in London and later as press attaché to the British ambassador, Sir John Maffey, in neutral Ireland. (I was able to prove that, besides being what his wife called "a bogus diplomat," he also acted as a spy—for Britain, of course.)

After the war there were more poems, culminating in the huge commercial success of his *Collected Poems* (1958), and a lot more broadcasting, including one of the classics of television filming, *Metroland* (1973), directed by Edward Mirzoeff. In that film, Betjeman visited places on the Metropolitan Line of the London Underground—finding, among other curiosities, a man who had moved a cinema Wurlitzer organ into his small suburban house.

Tara Heinemann

Bevis Hillier, John Betjeman, 1982

He was also renowned as an architectural conservationist. He failed to save the Euston Arch in 1961—a great classical portico which stood in front of Euston Station in London. He also met defeat when he tried to rescue the cast-iron London Coal Exchange, which the City of London criminally demolished in 1962. But in 1963—having learned from these debacles—he managed to save the 1880s artistic settlement of Bedford Park in west London. Thereafter, no conservation campaign was considered valid without his illegible signature on the petition.

He was appointed poet laureate in 1972. Everyone thought he would be ideal in that role—with the Queen asking him to pen poems on the marriages of her children, and so on. But for two reasons he did not shine in it. First, he was suffering increasingly from Parkinson's Disease, and second, as he told me, "I simply cannot write to order." For him, inspiration came "from the Management" (as he referred to God, looking heavenward). It was not something he could turn on like a faucet.

Towards the end of my 28 years' work on the biography, I had to try to work out what his future standing might be in English literature. Enough time had elapsed since his death to attempt a fair assessment. I think that when you are writing someone's biography, there is a danger of claiming too much for him or her. I rather hedged my bets with Betjeman, writing, in pastiche of Gilbert and Sullivan: "He was the very model of a major minor poet."

Some people think he will survive by his more serious poems. But Keats does love better, Wordsworth and Milton are more profound on death. To my mind, it is Betjeman's humorous verse that will survive. His satires of the English middle class in the 1950s have a historical, as well as poetical, value. He was also a fine topographical poet. His friend Sir Harold Acton wrote to me: "He was the genius of the *genius loci*" and I wrote in the final volume of the biography, "If England stays much the same, it will be delightedly recognized in Betjeman's poems; if ruined, it will survive in them."

Perhaps I may also be allowed to quote the peroration of the biography which became a labor of love and almost a life's work:

> Like Dr. Johnson and Oscar Wilde, he imprinted and impressed his personality on his age. As a result, the word 'Betjemanesque" . . . entered the language. It joined bowdlerize, boycott, banting, Bradshaw, Belisha beacon, Biro, Benedictine, Bewick's swan, buddleia and Byronic in the Oxford English Dictionary. In 1961 [the cartoonist] Cummings could draw Betjeman alongside President Kennedy as one of the six men best known to Britons. That fame was temporal. Betjemania is over; but the Betjemanesque survives, and will survive. ♦

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I feel as if I've just had the wind knocked out of me and my heart aches. If not only my heart but the heart of Mr. Altman's wife and family and many fellow actors/artists that admire him for his work and love him for making people laugh whenever and however he could. . . . I am lucky enough to of been able to work with Robert Altman amongst the other greats on a film that I can genuinely say created a turning point in my career. . . . He left us with a legend that all of us have the ability to do. . . . If I can do anything for those who are in a very hard time right now, as I'm one of them with hearing this news, please take advantage of the fact that I'm just a phone call away. God Bless, peace and love always. Thank You. "BE ADEQUITE." [sic, throughout]

—Open letter from Lindsay Lohan on the death of director Robert Altman, Nov. 21.

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ON THE TOWN WITH

Rex Reed

One Film Icon Rememembers Another

RR: May I speak with Lindsay Lohan, please?

LL: This is Lindsay Lohan.

RR: Thank you for taking my call. I wanted to express my condolences to you on the death of Mr. Altman.

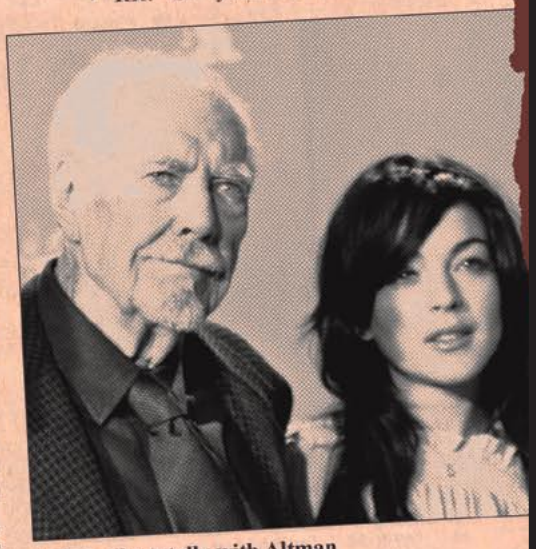
LL: *(pause)*

RR: But I did want to follow up on something you said about working with him on a film that "created a turning point in my career." Of course, you meant *A Prairie Home Companion*. But what about your work with Angela Robinson on *Herbie Fully Loaded*, or when Mark Waters directed you in *Freaky Friday*? Surely they were just as important to your development as an actor?

LL: Well, I'm wooden getting into a saturation where I have to compare Altman with Angela she's really a super person and clothes freind although I don't know Mark as well but I think that like the too are very differently because in *Herbie* my character is totally a person who wood of like to be more different from the other people then she could be and I mean that's how the wrighters wrote it up. But whenever Angela's like yelling at me "be sad!" and "be hapy!" in each seen, making me feel inadequite, and Altman is like "Go with the flo" and "If it feels good do it" and he dozen make me rember my lines each time.

RR: So you felt that Altman allowed you to participate in the process?

LL: Totally. Also Altman is like totally respecful of me amongst the other greats as an artist who wood of liken to give ideas about how a seen too be plaid. He was totally OK with my developing as an actor because he new that I have been there with our God-given talent and its not all about Altman who made like hunderds of films that are immortel in the hole world as everybo



Lohan like totally with Altman

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